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September 1920

THE
RED BOOK

MAGAZINE



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Program

- I Carmen—Prelude to Act I
Philadelphia Orchestra
- II Madama Butterfly—Un bel di vedremo
Geraldine Farrar
- III Minuet in G
Ignace Jan Paderewski
- IV Song of the Shepherd-Lehl
Alma Gluck
- V Symphony in F Minor, No. 4
Boston Symphony Orchestra

Program



- VI Don Giovanni—Il mio tesoro
John McCormack
- VII But the Lord is Mindful of His Own
Ernestine Schumann-Heink
- VIII Pagliacci—Vesti la giubba
Enrico Caruso
- IX Concerto for Two Violins
Fritz Kreisler and Efreim Zimbalist
- X Sextet from Lucia
Caruso, Galli-Curci, Egner, De Luca, Journet, Beda

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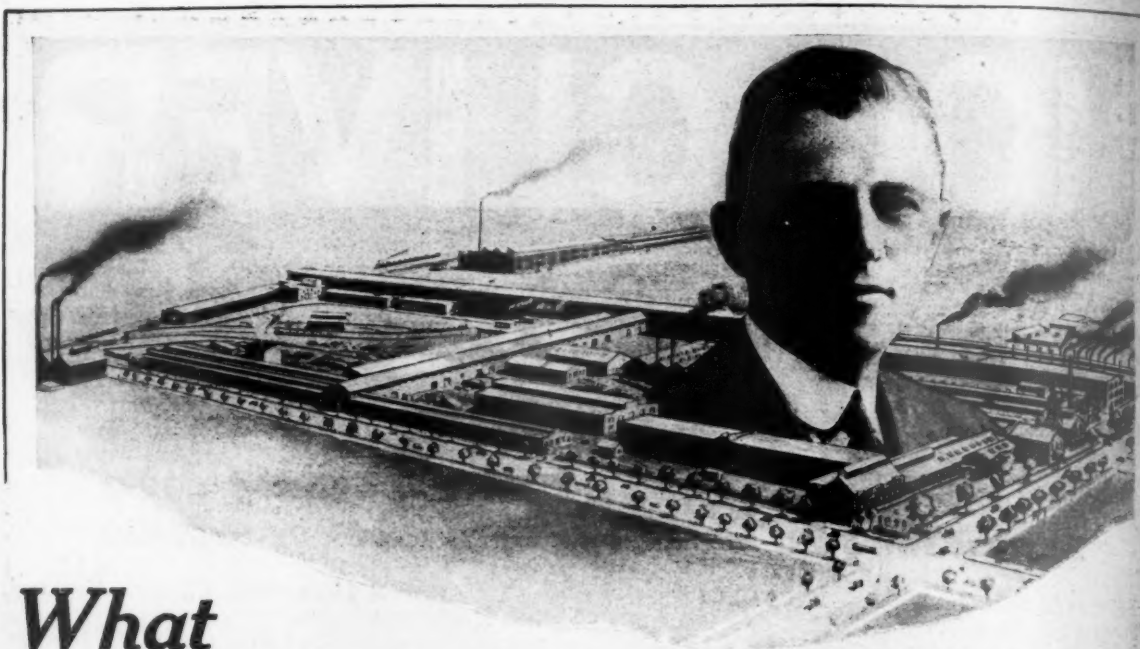
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Vol. XXXV, No. 5

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER
1920

Cover Design, painted by Haskell Coffin. Art Section, Beautiful Women

The Best Serial Novels of the Year

Beauty	By Rupert Hughes	27
	Illustrated by W. T. Benda	
The Yellow Horde	By Hal Evarts	48
	Illustrated by Charles Livingston Bull	
A Daughter of Discontent	By Clarence Budington Kelland	63
	Illustrated by Frank Street	
Periwinkle House	By Opie Read	73
	Illustrated by Dean Cornwell	

The Best Short Stories of the Month

The Hunch	By Albert Payson Terhune	33
	Illustrated by James H. Crank	
You Never Know Your Wife	By George Weston	38
	Illustrated by Will Grege	
Bill Titus Eke Butts In	By J. Frank Davis	43
	Illustrated by Clark Fay	
Up in the Air	By F. Britten Austin	53
	Illustrated by J. E. Allen	
With Seven Paradise Plumes	By Mary Synon	58
	Illustrated by Edward Ryan	
Brannigan	By Lawrence Perry	68
	Illustrated by George Wright	
Trails to Santa Fe	By William Dudley Pelley	78
	Illustrated by Robert E. Johnston	
Lampert	By William Mac Harg	83
	Illustrated by Henry Raleigh	
Once a Thief	By O. F. Lewis	87
	Illustrated by Wilson V. Chambers	

—And—

Bruce Barton's Common-Sense Editorial		25
Old and New	By Alfred Noyes	47
	Illustrated by J. Allen St. John	

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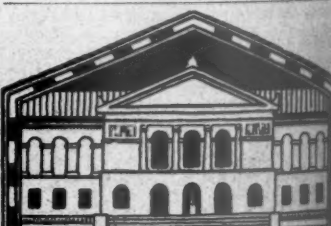
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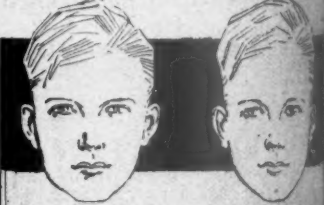
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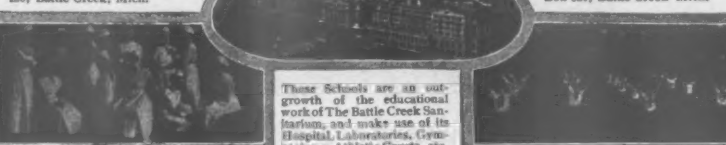
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No Promotion in 40 Years—Why

Forty years ago—when he was eighteen years old—this man first sat at the desk he still occupies. Forty years ago he commenced to do the clerical work which he has done over and over, day after day, through all these years.

As a young man he was ambitious to win promotion, increased salary and business success. He wanted to enjoy the good things of life which go with such success. But, for some reason or other, he seemed unable to get beyond the same old clerical job. He saw many younger men come into the organization and, in a few years, far outdistance him. He saw them rise from a clerical desk next to his to the private offices of highly paid executives, officers and directors.

He felt that they had been favored—that they were being given opportunities which rightly should be his. He used to call them *lucky fellows* and *hope* that the next chance for advancement would be *thrown his way*. Today he feels that he has been wronged by the firm for which he has worked so honestly and conscientiously for so many years. He feels that they have never given him the chance to advance himself which his long term of service entitles him to. *He thinks that opportunity has passed him by.*

Think a minute. Form your own opinion. *Did opportunity pass this man by* and offer itself to the many other younger men who have far outstripped him in life's race for success? *No!* This man has had just as many opportunities as any man in his organization. Every time a younger man passed him it was because the younger man *saw and was prepared to grasp an opportunity* which the older man not only could not see but was not prepared to grasp even had he seen it.

This man did what thousands of men are doing every day. He took a job, worked hard and conscientiously and felt that by properly taking care of his work every day he would earn gradual promotion and finally achieve business success. He made the worst mistake any man in business can make. He failed to appreciate that success is not a matter of luck—that it can never be won by those who sit calmly down on the job and wait for opportunity to *drag* them to something higher. He blinded himself to his own shortcomings. He has

spent forty years on one job simply because *he never prepared and trained himself for anything better.*

If, instead of sitting at his desk day after day, year in and year out, *hoping* that a chance for advancement would be *thrown* his way and envying those younger men who passed him, he had stopped his *hoping* long enough to *find out* why these men were passing him he would have found that instead of *hoping* for advancement these men were *preparing and training* for advancement.

Today we find both kinds of men—those who are *hoping* for advancement, increased salary and business success, and those who are *preparing themselves by training for promotion and success.* The man who only *hopes* is lost—the man who *trains* for promotion will win success—nothing can stop him—he has ambition and the courage and tenacity with which to back up his ambition.

More than 225,000 of such ambitious men have taken advantage of the training obtainable from the LaSalle Extension University—the University which extends to the man employed in business a thoro education and training of university grade in higher business subjects. More than 50,000 men are now enrolling with LaSalle every year. These men realized that they cannot advance in business, that they cannot earn big salaries unless they have the knowledge and training which fits them successfully to perform the duties of an executive position.

And the training you receive from LaSalle is a real training. You are not asked to memorize a multitude of principles without thoro drill and practice in applying them.

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Your training is a result of the constant effort and supervision of LaSalle's staff of more than 450 business specialists—trained executives, experienced public accountants, efficiency experts, writers, special lecture writers, instructors and assistants. You are, in effect, at the very side of the big executive in private office—guided step by step in the handling of problems or cases just as they arise in daily experience and are handled by the executive himself.

If you are ambitious to succeed and have the tenacity with which to back up your ambition you can easily find at least one hour out of the twenty-four to devote to LaSalle home-study—preparing yourself for advancement, increased salary and business success—to insuring yourself against spending forty years on one job like the man at the top of this page.

You must make your own success—no one can help you if you refuse to be helped. Find out upon below the home-study training course which will train you for the position in which you are most interested. Mark an X before that course. Then send this coupon and we will send you full information about LaSalle Problem Method of Training, the real cost, and the convenient plan of payment. We will send you a copy of "Ten Years' Promotion"—an interesting book which tells how and why the aid of LaSalle training have gained a year's promotion which men unaided have gained in ten. The facts contained in this book have been an inspiration to many thousands of ambitious men. Which course shall we tell you about?

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How In One Evening I Learned The Secret of Drawing

By Walter Sayden

FROM boyhood, I have always wanted to draw things. I suppose there are hundreds of young fellows who feel the same way as I did. I often said that if it were possible, I should choose commercial art as a profession. It was not only the big salaries and independence enjoyed by artists and cartoonists that appealed to me, it was the fascination of the game itself.

But I could hardly draw a straight line. My friends used to have laughing attempts to sketch

One morning, as I was coming into town on the eight o'clock train, I met Larry Stafford. I had come into town with him every day for years, usually passing the time discussing the morning papers.

But this particular morning he had a pad and pencil in his hand. He was drawing the pictures of things that looked like a series of small

"What on earth are you doing?" I asked in amazement.

Larry smiled. "Don't be afraid, I am quite sane. These little pictures are part of a scheme of mine. I am illustrating an idea. They are supposed to be a graphic representation of a deal I am putting up. They speak louder than

I watched him, amazed to see that he was very well indeed. As he proceeded, the drawings became more life-like, and my curiosity was aroused—I asked him

"Why, I am surprised that you ask me," he answered. "Look how easy it is"—and he quickly sketched a few more figures and grinned at my amazement.

"There is just one little secret, of the kind thing, Walter," he added. "I never saw before in my life, and you see, these little sketches really are not bad, are they? You have always wanted to draw, and even if you don't become an artist, you will find it a mighty convenient thing to know. This secret is drawing as easy as writing. Let's

do it together this evening and I'll show you how simple it is. I'll give you a little

The Greatest Surprise of My Life

That night I was astonished to find that there was but One Great Secret that covered every sort of drawing. I mastered this rule in just fifty minutes, and in two hours found that I could draw. Think of it! It was almost

like magic. I had never before been able to draw a recognizable object.

At this time I was a salesman, so that the only time that I had to practice and apply this secret, this Rule, was in spare minutes when at the office or at home. But I progressed with almost unbelievable rapidity.

My First Real Drawing

One day I was talking with a buyer. Remembering Larry's "idea-pictures," I drew some figures to illustrate the point I was trying to establish. He looked at the pictures and caught my idea at once. Before I left he gave me a larger order than I had ever before received from him. My pictures had put my idea over.

This worked so well, that I tried it again several times, in fact—and each time I got the same results. My pictures seemed to make a stronger appeal than my words, and my sales increased tremendously.

But that was not all. Two weeks later, I overheard a conversation that struck me as amusing. I wrote it down, illustrated it and, just for fun, sent it to one of the humorous weeklies. A few days later, to my great surprise and pleasure, I received a check from the art editor and a request for more contributions.

From that time on, I sent in little sketches and jokes, more or less regularly. A few months ago, I received an offer which startled me. The magazine for which I had been drawing wished to take me on the regular staff at a much greater salary than I was then making.

My love of drawing came strongly to the front and, needless to say, I accepted at once, and the first thing I did was to tell Larry Stafford, what his idea had led to. When he heard that I was actually a successful artist on a real magazine he gasped with amazement.

I told him how the same One Great Rule of drawing which had made it easy for him to draw had meant even more to me—and how this simple home-study course by a famous artist, Charles Lederer, which we had gone over that evening, had given me the secret which had meant so much.

Larry laughed at my enthusiasm, but admitted that such a remarkable success as mine was enough to make a man a bit optimistic.

Easier than Learning to Operate a Typewriter

Through this amazing system, drawing can be taught as easily as anything else. In his simple, home-study course a world-famous cartoonist, Charles Lederer, teaches you to draw just as a business school teaches you to keep books, or operate a typewriter or write shorthand. But it is a hundred times simpler than any of those accomplishments.

And the best part of it all is that the course teaches you to draw so that you can sell your pictures right from the start. That is really the most important part after all. Everyone wants to sell his work, and that is just what you can do, with Mr. Lederer's great secret.

Don't misunderstand, I am not praising



The most fascinating Business in the world

myself. The point is this,—if I, who never was able to draw at all, could achieve this really remarkable success, others can do the same, or better.

See for yourself,—send for the course and try it out. If you can draw at all you will probably get along even faster than I, and you will find modern commercial art the most fascinating and delightful work imaginable. Remember, that opportunities in this uncrowded field are unlimited. There is a constantly growing demand for cartoonists and illustrators. If you like to draw, or if you think that you would like to draw, don't miss this wonderful opportunity to learn in an evening or two of your spare time.

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We want you to prove to your own satisfaction the tremendous value of Mr. Lederer's discovery. It will not cost you one penny. We want you to examine the Entire Course at our expense for five days. If you will just fill out the coupon below, detach it and mail it to us, we will gladly send you the complete course for your approval. We feel sure that when you see the surprising simplicity of this method you will agree with us that it is the greatest discovery ever made in this field.

Look it over, test it out—then if after five days you decide that you want it, send us \$7.00. If you do not wish to keep it, return it to us and forget the matter.

But act AT ONCE. Learn to draw—whether or not your aim is commercial art. It is a big asset no matter which field you are in. Let us disclose to you the whole secret. Detach the coupon and mail it TODAY.

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In other words, a "run-down" condition very often affects the scalp. After an illness like influenza, for example, the circulation of the scalp may become sluggish, the gland openings clogged and choked with waste secretions. The scalp tissues, in this weakened state, are an easy prey to dandruff germs.

Once these dandruff germs have asserted their supremacy, the scalp almost gives up the unequal struggle. The hair becomes dry and brittle, evincing a tendency to split easily and break at the ends. Its growth, too, is retarded—it begins to *fall out*.

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Depend upon it, regular shampooing with the health-giving pine tar lather of Packer's Tar Soap will help the undernourished scalp to throw off the accumulated waste and stimulate the growth of healthy, attractive hair.

There are very few drug stores and department stores where Packer's Tar Soap is not sold.

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is a digest of practical information on the care of the hair and scalp, compiled from authoritative sources, by a New York physician. A copy of this manual, now in its fourth edition, will be sent you on request. A more detailed treatment of the subject of "dandruff" will be found on pages 16-22 of this manual.



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To this invention, some wit has ascribed the origin of that paternal classic, "Tut, tut! Time that young man went home!"

Ornate in design, elaborate in workmanship, they were found only in the homes of a wealthy few. The hour hand was sometimes mounted on a large bell, and curved to meet the dial figures on the rim. The meaning of the minute was still undreamed of—why think of minutes when clocks varied an hour a day?

Yet the Table Clock—plaything of the rich, but logical forerunner of *portable* clocks, or "watches"—brought the old world a long stride forward toward the timekeeping marvels of the Twentieth Century—

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The Magazine of a Remade World

Just Picking On Each Other

A common-sense editorial by BRUCE BARTON

IN one week's reading of the daily newspapers I gained the following information:

That seventy-five per cent of the newspaper men of this country are infidels and hence antagonistic to the churches—from the speech of a Southern preacher.

That this would be a far better country if every Irishman would kill a negro and be hanged for it—from the speech of a violent anti-Irish agitator.

That America presents a spectacle of "braggart insolence swaggering unchecked through wastes of mendacity," and will be "England's Next Enemy"—from an article written by a member of the English Parliament.

That our college professors are pitiful failures and our colleges mere breeding-grounds for socialism—from a disgruntled ex-college president.

I could fill this issue of the magazine with similar quotations: they make up a considerable percentage of the daily news, intensifying the shortage of white paper.

Every such item means that somebody's feelings are hurt, that the faith of folks in each other is weakened just a little more. And what good service is performed by any of them? Why can't we foolish children pretend we're grown up for just a little while, and quit this senseless habit of picking on each other?

It's a habit that has soiled every page of history. Every chapter is a pitiful record of good men breaking each other's hearts, of honest men branding each other as liars, and patriotic men accusing each other of treason.

And the net result in progress is zero.

I have two firm convictions that I would like to pass on to all public speakers and writers who feel a burning moral obligation to denounce.

First—I am surer every day that human nature does not change. Our vision of it changes, as our mental atmosphere is one of

sunshine or fog. My babies are perfect angels one day and little demons the next. Actually, of course, they are the same joy-loving, mischief-making youngsters. Only one day I am rested and laugh at their pranks; and the next day I am tired and scold. I get caught in a crowd and am pushed about; I either smile or am angry. And the crowd becomes a "good-natured crowd" or a "boorish crowd" according to my mood. We get from people what we give; we find in them what we bring; and the changes are not changes in them so much as changes in ourselves.

Second—the division of folks into *good* and *bad* is an utterly senseless division. We have such strange prejudices in this matter. We think of all doctors as self-sacrificing and of all lawyers as sharp; we picture firemen as heroes, but policemen always as crooks. We assume that all farmers are honest and all Wall Street bankers are thieves.

I have lived on a farm and lived in New York: I have had all kinds of friends. And my belief is that if you could put any given million men into a caldron and boil the virtue out of them, it would weigh to an ounce exactly as much as the virtue distilled from any other million.

We're all good and bad, all self-sacrificing and mean; and almost any man, given a decent chance, would rather be honest than not.

WHEN Lincoln delivered his first inaugural address, ex-President Tyler wrote a letter to Francis Lieber. Praising the high sentiment and fine idealism of the speech? Not at all. He criticized Lincoln's grammar.

In that petty spirit we waste so many of our days. Disregarding the splendid note in the lives of our fellow-men and criticizing their grammar! Blind to their sacrifices, irritable under their little short-comings, making the game harder all the way just by picking on each other!

Another of Bruce Barton's Common-sense Editorials will appear on this page in the next issue of the Red Book Magazine.

SELZNICK PICTURES



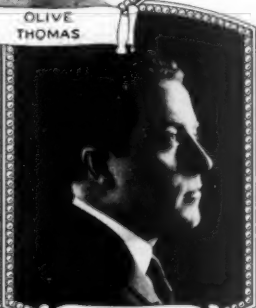
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The Magazine of a Remade World

Just Picking On Each Other

A common-sense editorial by BRUCE BARTON

IN one week's reading of the daily newspapers I gained the following information: That seventy-five per cent of the newspaper men of this country are infidels and hence antagonistic to the churches—from the speech of a Southern preacher.

That this would be a far better country if every Irishman would kill a negro and be hanged for it—from the speech of a violent anti-Irish agitator.

That America presents a spectacle of "braggart insolence swaggering unchecked through wastes of mendacity," and will be "England's Next Enemy"—from an article written by a member of the English Parliament.

That our college professors are pitiful failures and our colleges mere breeding-grounds for socialism—from a disgruntled ex-college president.

I could fill this issue of the magazine with similar quotations: they make up a considerable percentage of the daily news, intensifying the shortage of white paper.

Every such item means that somebody's feelings are hurt, that the faith of folks in each other is weakened just a little more. And what good service is performed by any of them? Why can't we foolish children pretend we're grown up for just a little while, and quit this senseless habit of picking on each other?

It's a habit that has soiled every page of history. Every chapter is a pitiful record of good men breaking each other's hearts, of honest men branding each other as liars, and patriotic men accusing each other of treason.

And the net result in progress is zero.

I have two firm convictions that I would like to pass on to all public speakers and writers who feel a burning moral obligation to denounce.

First—I am surer every day that human nature does not change. Our vision of it changes, as our mental atmosphere is one of

sunshine or fog. My babies are perfect angels one day and little demons the next. Actually, of course, they are the same joy-loving, mischief-making youngsters. Only one day I am rested and laugh at their pranks; and the next day I am tired and scold. I get caught in a crowd and am pushed about; I either smile or am angry. And the crowd becomes a "good-natured crowd" or a "boorish crowd" according to my mood. We get from people what we give; we find in them what we bring; and the changes are not changes in them so much as changes in ourselves.

Second—the division of folks into *good* and *bad* is an utterly senseless division. We have such strange prejudices in this matter. We think of all doctors as self-sacrificing and of all lawyers as sharp; we picture firemen as heroes, but policemen always as crooks. We assume that all farmers are honest and all Wall Street bankers are thieves.

I have lived on a farm and lived in New York: I have had all kinds of friends. And my belief is that if you could put any given million men into a caldron and boil the virtue out of them, it would weigh to an ounce exactly as much as the virtue distilled from any other million.

We're all good and bad, all self-sacrificing and mean; and almost any man, given a decent chance, would rather be honest than not.

WHEN Lincoln delivered his first inaugural address, ex-President Tyler wrote a letter to Francis Lieber. Praising the high sentiment and fine idealism of the speech? Not at all. *He criticized Lincoln's grammar.*

In that petty spirit we waste so many of our days. Disregarding the splendid note in the lives of our fellow-men and criticizing their grammar! Blind to their sacrifices, irritable under their little short-comings, making the game harder all the way just by picking on each other!

Another of Bruce Barton's Common-sense Editorials will appear on this page in the next issue of the Red Book Magazine.

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SEPTEMBER, 1920
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THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN
Editor



Here begins

BEAUTY

By
RUPERT HUGHES

Illustrated by
W. T. BENDA

CHAPTER I

THE maid who brought up the breakfast was already dressed for flight. Her cap and apron had been packed, and she looked like a poor relation, with none of the smartness a servant gains from the uniform of lace and linen. She stood with one knee uplifted to support the tray she braced against the door while she knocked with her free hand.

She knocked twice, got no answer, turned the knob softly, pushed in with an apologetic mien. And if anything demands apology, it is the outrage of a summons from slumber.

Berthe was saved from the crime, for the bed was empty. The

covers were all awry, as if the nestling had flung them off impatiently. Berthe was glad of this, for she always hated to waken her young mistress; Miss Clelia slept so beautifully—and was so beautiful! Waking her was like tearing a flower out of the ground by the roots, a flower that cried out in protest, as the mandrake used to. Indeed young Miss Blakeney, Miss Clelia Blakeney, was apt to put up a drowsy fight, trying to stay drowned in the deeps of oblivion, as if she were a daily suicide resisting rescue.

And this was strange too; for when Clelia was once awake, nobody could be awaker or aliver. And nobody could fiercelier hate to go to bed. Her rules of sleep seemed to be Mark Twain's very own, the ones he announced at his seventieth birthday dinner as the secret of his longevity: "Never go to bed while there is anybody to sit up with; and never get up till you have to."

Berthe had no idea when her mistress had got to bed the night before. Berthe had been told not to sit up, but there had been a deal of commotion about the big house—just enough noise of music, dance, laughter and chatter to keep the servants awake in their quarters once removed, yet not enough noise to satisfy their curiosity. There had been a very promising quarrel of some sort, and two slammed doors—just whose, it was not agreed in the early-morning comparison of notes.

Berthe set the tray on the bedside table and went to knock at the bathroom door to warn Ma'm'selle that the time was brief. The door was open, the bathroom empty.

Puzzled, Berthe surveyed the bedroom again. The dinner-gown of the night before was tossed across the chaise longue. The traveling suit that Berthe had laid out precisely was where she had left it. Corsets, combination, stockings, ribbons, garters were here and there. The bathrobe was across the footboard of the bed. But the bedroom slippers were gone. And that was *drôle*, thought Berthe. Her trunks had been removed the night before.

THE window was wide open, and a sharpening gale was harrying the frothy pennants of the curtains. A few snowflakes went by outside, spotting the brown world to a fawn's skin. The big storm was already at hand.

It was the storm, or the swift fame of it, that was causing the stampede in this camp. They called it a "camp" because it was in the woods of the Adirondacks; but it was more like a palace—the palace of a Viking king, a stronghold made of huge logs and ax-beveled timbers mitigated with rich hangings and heaped luxuriousness. And clustered about it was a brood of little houses, a dining-house, a kitchen-house, a music-house, one for billiards, another for bachelors; one for servants, others for other people and purposes.

An Indian summer of unusual tarrying and undreamed-of balm had coaxed this little throng of Mrs. Roantree's guests to linger in the well-tamed wilderness long beyond the custom. Then suddenly the belated New York papers had announced the uprising of a blizzard in the Northwest. It came conquering and irresistible with the roar and velocity of a barbaric horde of airships swooping a mile a minute and rolling beneath it across townships, counties and States a vast billow of sleet and snow and ice.

The Roantree camp was far from the big hotels and fifteen miles from the nearest railroad station. The roads writhing about the mountains were not good for motor speed. There were but two through trains a day, and the afternoon express reached New York at an unholy hour. When blizzards raged, the trains floundered and stuck; passengers starved and shivered, and life became one long battle with the weather. Therefore the Roantree party had delayed till the last moment, hoping that the storm would slide off the sideline into Canada; but at length the weather reports put an end to hope.

The last day in camp had been as blithe and innocent of winter as the utter peace before a simoom. There was a very pathos of loveliness in the air. The evening sighed, and the moon mused with the white face of all regret, regret that tenderness must end and cruel times begin.

The crowd took a phonograph out on the piazza and danced in the blue twilight, or listened to the heartbreaking melodies of famous singers who earned fortunes by skirling their graceful anguishes about the world on rubber wheels. The little populace hated to go back to town, especially since several promising intrigues of more or less innocence had flourished in the water-mirrored canoes or along the leafy aisles of the infinite forest.

The members of the Lower House, the large assembly of servants, had overheard and overlooked just enough indiscretion to keep them from perishing of boredom. They enhanced their own self-respect by expressing in advance a great horror of scandals

that might develop, and yet suffered incessant disappointment when they failed to appear.

The servants were at a frightful disadvantage in the duel between upstairs and downstairs over the concealment of the truth. The mountains and lakes were too large a stage for the servants to keep under inspection, and there was peculiar comfort in imagining the worst with no documents to betray. Suspicion for suspicion's sake gives little nourishment. The restless to get back to town.

The guests, though, were of a contrary mood, since the notion of housed romance was bound to be much less romantic far more difficult, for in spite of the venerable lies to the contrary mischief is very near to nature's heart; mischief is almost its principal business.

The storm settled the matter and warned them all to get gone to the city again.

AND now Berthe stood perplexed in Miss Clelia's room, wondering where she could be. The whole big house and all the little houses were in a stir. Maids and men were bringing wind-blown breakfast-trays along the covered walk to the kitchen to the main house. If Clelia had been in any of the rooms, she would have been sent scurrying.

Berthe dismissed with self-rebuke one or two suspicious thoughts that went through her sophisticated brain like dark snowflakes. The servants' stories of wicked persons who had overslept in the rooms and made hideous dashes in the light of day. The story was outrageous in Miss Clelia's case, but for lack of any else to look, she stepped out on the porch that ran about the house. It was only one story high, its numerous rooms opening on a vast encircling piazza and in on a vast encircled room.

There was no hint of Clelia out of doors. The air was filled with increasing wind. Two motor-trucks loaded with guests that had been packed the night before were already roaring up the mountain road to beat the storm to the station. A half-dozen limousines and touring-cars lay at anchor outside the big house, ready to carry off all of the guests except two men who were to stop a while.

Clelia had expressed a wish to stop with them, but her maid grimly refused to stay and be snowed in; and so had all the women, whose ideal of winter weather was the sort that the Beach furnished, or Miami.

Berthe hurried back into the bedroom, the wind howling in and banging the door after her. She closed the window, set to stripping the bed of its clothes, folding the blankets, carrying the sheets to the big hamper in the hall. She looked over the chilling of the coffee and the eggs and the muffled horror of a spoiled breakfast wrought upon her till she ran along the doors, knocking at every one where there was a guest, and asking if Miss Clelia were there.

Everybody answered "No!" according to her early mood. Berthe stood distraught. She was almost tempted to go to the bachelors' den and ask. Mr. Coykendall and Mr. Larrick had been most notoriously devoted to Clelia; her tantalizing flickers of favor had driven them almost to a cornered duel.

Berthe was saved from a desperate impudence by the glance of the men themselves. They had dressed quickly, and some of them had breakfasted at a gulp according to male habit. They stared at Berthe but did not speak. They were gentlemen, Coykendall and Frewin, and it was their idea of modesty that a woman in distress would ask their aid if she were in and would prefer not to be disturbed until she did.

But Mr. Larrick, who was a Texas gentleman, had another idea. Seeing Berthe in a state of arrested suspense, he paused and to say without a trace of the intonation adopted by the kindly master to the most valued servant, but just as to a woman:

"Good mawn'n, Bert; what's the trouble?"

"Oh, Mr. Larrick, Mees Clelie I cannot find. The weather goes cold, and she must dress in a hurry."

"You can't find Miss Cleely! Did you look—"

"Avrywhere."

"That's funny," said Larrick with all solemnity. "What do you reckon she's at?"

"Did I know!"

"Have you asked her aunt?"

"Yes, sair. But I weel hosk again."

She knocked at Mrs. Roantree's door, and being told she entered to explain. Mrs. Roantree always got mad first

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"You cain't shoot, and you know it, you yalla-livered skunk.
You cain't even leave go of the trigga. Go on and shoot!"

afterward relapsed to courtesy. She rebuked Berthe vigorously for asking such a foolish question, then apostrophized the absent Clelia for being such a nuisance, then grew alarmed, and flinging on a wrap, charged into Clelia's room to see for herself.

Other guests, hearing the commotion, hung out of their doors, heads in various stages of unreadiness for inspection, and asked: "What's up?" "What's wrong?" "What's the matter?"

One thing was sure: there was absolutely no trace of Clelia. Everything of hers was found except her slippers, her nightgown and herself. And that was "*drôle*," as Berthe kept repeating with less and less of the stoic calm she was paid for.

CHAPTER II

MRS. ROANTREE had come to respect spiritualism since it grew fashionable. She agreed with Sir Oliver and Sir Arthur and Sir William in accepting the materialization of the dead as a frequent and easy matter. She had had a number of undeniable communications with the Other Side herself. But even she was not ready to believe in the dematerialization of the living. And now she stood in the center of her disheveled guests declaiming:

"People don't just vanish!"

She protested as angrily as if some one had insisted that they did. She kept retorting to persons who had not disagreed with her and quarreling with beliefs that nobody expressed; but she contradicted her own statements with fine impartiality.

"It's perfectly outrageous of Clelia to do such a thing. Why couldn't she have some consideration for the rest of us? I haven't finished my breakfast yet, and it's ruined. If there is anything I loathe, it is lukewarm coffee and cold poached eggs. The poor child must be somewhere. But where could she be? She couldn't have gone gadding about with next to nothing on. Yet here are all her clothes. Haven't you called her? Call her, why don't you?"

She ran to the porch door and startled the men by her disarray and her clamor. "Oh, Clelia! Clelia! Child, where are you?—Somebody run down to the lake and see if she's fallen in and drowned. No, that wouldn't do any good, because if she had, you couldn't see her, could you? Or could you? And she certainly wouldn't be going down for a swim on such a morning as this, with snow in the air. She couldn't have gone mountain-climbing, either, in her satin slippers. You might get the megaphone and call, or take a look over at the mountains, somebody. She might be hiding somewhere, of course. But I do hope her sense of humor is better than that. She begged so hard to stay here. She may be hiding to keep me from dragging her back. One thing is certain. I'll not stay, whether I find her or not. Listen to that wind! We'll hardly make the train as it is. Oh, Lord, what pests people are! It might be really something serious, you know. If anything happened to that angel—Oh, dear, such a world!"

None of the other women could stay. They insisted that they would love to, if—they would not think of going, if—but—and—of course—

Two of the men, Coykendall and Frewin, glared at each other suspiciously, and Larrick glared at both of them. But none of the men uttered his suspicions or his theories. Larrick was the only one who acted on Mrs. Roantree's wild suggestions to run down and glance at the lake and take a look at the mountains. Even the servants pretended not to hear and busied themselves with breaking camp. The men guests were in too great a hurry to get away, or too lazy of body or soul, or too sensible, to follow will-o'-the-wisps.

Larrick ran out into the whirlpool of storm and wind. He could almost have counted the number of snowflakes he had seen in his life before this storm. He could hardly believe his eyes now. Last night when he looked from his window, his gaze could reach to the stars. Now, out of nowhere, out of nothing, white tufts of swan's-down were magically evolved. He caught big flakes on his hand and had just time to marvel at their astounding architecture, the tiny majesty of their patterned silver gossamer, when, almost instantly, they were gone back into the nothing they came from.

Clelia was like that. She had come into his vision suddenly, overwhelming him with a miracle of grace. And now she had winked out like a bubble, like a snowflake.

There were multitudes of other snowflakes, but where was Clelia? He ran, calling her name: "Miss Blakeney! Miss Blakeney!" And then, since terror gave him courage: "Miss Clelia—Miss Ceel-ya-a-a!"

But the wind swirled his very cry about his head as if it whipped cigar-smoke. He cast his eyes over the slaty shores of the broad lake where little gales scampered in coveys like the prints of small invisible animals fugitive from the big wind's way. But there was no hint of Clelia in that anxious waste.

Larrick darted wildly here and there, up and down the mountain paths, but while his eyes were ready to survey like a caught dryad, he found no trace of her. He plunged into the green wilderness and lost his way. By the time he got back to the house, the automobiles had gone. He could not scooting along the distant roads and dwindling from his wains to frightened beetles. In spite of her threats, the mountain tree had not deserted her niece. But the two men Larrick was jealous of, Coykendall and Frewin, had gone. And Larrick had been glad of that if he could have been glad of anything.

Only two men stayed: Burnley, the painter of mountain scenes; and Randel the sculptor, whose lungs had dimmed by their dereliction. He laid the blame on marble dust, but the doctor had advised him to spend the winter in the Adirondacks.

Randel was Clelia's cousin, and his kinship gave him a right to chide to anger.

"The others couldn't wait," he explained to Larrick. "I wouldn't. They felt sure she would turn up. I tried to tell her aunt to go; I said it would be a lesson to the brat. But my cousin, I offered to act as chaperon—as if anyone could control that unbroken colt! Damned funny where the little beast is."

"Don't!" Larrick groaned, as he winced. "She might be dead!" He could not say "dead;" it seemed impossible for Clelia to hideous word to have anything in common.

Now her little dog came whining out, a Pekingese of ordinary stateliness for her size. She could condescend to him. She was a dowager empress less than a foot tall. She had a fancy to Larrick because he was always willing to rub her back—and knew where and when and how. Larrick spoke to her. "Where is she? Go find her! Empress, go find Miss Blakeney!"

The Empress heard the name with delight and fanned herself with the silken plume of her tail. But she did not run. She was not a bloodhound. Her chief pride was that she had the minimum of nose; her nose was almost a dimple. She had been all night on Clelia's silken dinner-gown. Nothing was to be done for her, and so long as she had any part of Clelia's apartment, she was content to bask in that beloved atmosphere. She was not anxious yet. She was used to being left alone for hours and days, and until Clelia's clothes were taken away she would not worry.

Randel urged Larrick to have his breakfast.

"Cleel will turn up and give us all the laugh," he said. "She has never grown up out of her kid tricks, and she's hiding somewhere, thinking that her aunt would rather lose an eye than she had planned to take. Cleel will be sick when she sees the old lady has stayed behind. And those two famous men will do the rest."

Larrick grinned and pictured the sudden emergence of the radiant face of Clelia. He had seen the rival wills of the niece and the aunt; and it seemed probable that the girl had herself away somewhere in order to escape the return of her aunt. She had talked to Larrick once or twice about the great storm that could have meeting the blizzard halfway. He had never seen a blizzard, and she wanted to show him one. He was sure they would face it together. To be snowed in with her was a boyish love of conflict with nature, with storms, with surf, obstreperous horses, unruly dogs and restive men. He loved to watch her intrepid and defiant moods.

CONVINCED at length that she was playing a game of hide-and-seek and would appear in due time, Larrick went to his breakfast. He had never been able to negotiate a bed and had declined it in his room. It had been his dining casino by a servant who had gone to New York for rest. Cold as it was, Larrick enjoyed it. He was happy because Coykendall and Frewin, the most dangerous testaments for Miss Blakeney's favor, had deserted with him, leaving him alone at last, as he hoped, with the girl he adored.

He thought that they could not have loved her so well if they pretended, or they would never have abandoned the idea. And yet—he paused. Perhaps they felt that she was in danger from him. Perhaps one or the other of them had some idea of her that gave him a feeling of security, a feeling of safety for the Texan outsider who had blundered into their lodge.

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"Miss Clelia Blakeney as Puck," suddenly come to life from Shakespeare's pages.

That part of society which is called "Society" was like a secret society to Larrick. He could not make out the ritual or the rigmarole. He had a natural tact, a Southern graciousness and a Southern pride that carried him along, but he suffered for lack of fluency in the court language. He found it far more informal than his Texas slang, but different utterly. Fashionable ladies said and did so many things that unfashionable ladies would never dare to say or do!

Larrick was not so happy when he finished his breakfast. He was worried as to Clelia's probable treatment of him when she came from hiding. She might tire of him alone in a storm-besieged house. He was ill-equipped with parlor-tricks or stunts for dull evenings. Was she hiding? Suddenly terror pinched his heart anew.

Surely if the girl had only meant to conceal herself till her aunt got away, she would have stolen forth by now. With a curious suddenness he found himself remembering an old poem his mother had read to him once from a scrapbook: "Come where the woodbine twineth," was the refrain of it.

In that story-poem a young bride had crept into a great chest to hide from her young husband. As she hid herself laughing and drew the lid down, a spring lock snapped and made the box her coffin. She had smothered there, unheard, unheeded, unfound for years. And then she was only a skeleton and a little dust in ragged silk.

Larrick was so wrought upon by this old yarn that he began to ransack the whole place. Mrs. Roantree was finishing her toilet in a slow rage at being kept. Larrick searched every other room in every house. Many of the closet-doors were locked for the winter. He pounded on them and called through. In spite of the protests of Jeffers, the caretaker guide, he broke open several doors—jimmied them with pokers.

He looked under all the beds. He turned the storerooms out. He went through the neat rooms of the servants' quarters. He searched the cellars, the woodsheds, all the outbuildings, even the ice-house and the distant stable where an old horse or two, some cows and a pair of oxen drowsed. He lifted the cover from a well and peered down, lowering an electric flashlight.

By this time the air was afleece with snow. There was a cry in the wind, a witch-shriek and a sense of grisly hand snatching and pummeling, a sense of things persecuted and persecuting. Larrick went to the lake again, stumbled along the shore looking for footprints, shielding his eyes against the snowflakes that were flung blindingly into his face like confetti in a drunken carnival.

HIS panic excited the other men. Burnley and the guide Jeffers set forth to hunt. Randel ventured out, coughing. Mrs. Roantree appeared and began to grow hysterical, to dispatch everybody in all directions, to give orders, countermand them, and rage because they were not carried out. She tried to telephone to the nearest camps, but something was wrong with the wire. Perhaps the wind had overturned some of the poles. She could not get the Central.

Perhaps Clelia had gone ahead to the station and was on her way to New York by now. But this theory satisfied nobody.

The maid Berthe had refused to go to town. She threw off all pretensions to the self-control one expects of servants. She accepted the direst possibilities as facts and wept frantically. Mrs. Roantree called her a noisy idiot, but her own panic was evident. She hurried the guide away to inquire at some of the other camps on the chance that Clelia had gone visiting—perhaps in her sleep. "La Sonnambula" had been revived at the opera the season before, and Mrs. Roantree recalled the heroine errant in a night-gown.

Again and again Larrick went back to Clelia's room and stared at her clothes, where Berthe had laid them out in readiness for quick harnessing. The little Empress kept climbing on the chair, determined to guard them, purring when Larrick talked to her, whimpering when she seemed to understand that her mistress was gone. Larrick felt that the dog's certainty of her return was a good omen. Whenever he spoke to her, she would wag her tail and reassure him with snorts of optimism. Yet what could the dog know?

Larrick wanted to show some of Clelia's clothes to the guide's hunting dog, so that he might learn the scent and trace her. But he dreaded to lift them. Clelia's clothes were like herself, dainty, silken, extravagant, gay and lawless, peculiarly fascinating, a kind of fabricated laughter, delight woven into visible surfaces. Some of her clothes Larrick felt that he ought not to see; yet they were sanctified by her. They had been next to her. She had warmed

them and filled them with life. He could not give them to a dog to sniff.

He went back to the storm in profound wonderment at the blindfolding the world, hushing the summer. Winter, the presence was here with his white cruelty. There would be no more warmth of love among the flowers; the birds would quench their songs or take them South. The trees would strip themselves of their beautiful women would wrap their graces in the shaggy pelts of wild beasts.

BY and by the guide came back from the nearer camps with the word that all of them were closed and there was no sign of the girl about them. Then Mrs. Roantree persuaded the men in council before the fireplace now arched with great trees that had once been trees creeping skyward in green, but now in a scarlet.

Randel, who was peevish with confinement and too weary to join the hunt, evolved a cynical theory that Clelia had run away and had left her clothes as a blind. Mrs. Roantree grumbled at this: "Don't be a fool!"

Randel held his ground: "People are always leaving their clothes on beaches or in bathhouses so that their relatives and creditors will give them up for dead and not pursue them. They're usually embezzlers, though."

"Clelia couldn't have embezzled anything," Mrs. Roantree snapped. Burnley amended: "Except the hearts and the lives of several men. She loved to juggle with those."

"But she couldn't have eloped without a wardrobe. Clelia loved clothes too well for that. What could she have done with her clothes?"

Randel, who had read too many mystery stories, said: "She may have had another frock that you haven't missed. She might have bought a dress from one of the servants as a disguise. She might have gone to the station with one of the baggage-men. She might have taken it into her head to run one of the trains herself. She was always doing crazy things like that. She probably greeted the people at the station with a good laugh, and went on down to New York."

"But she wouldn't have left me marooned up here without word," Mrs. Roantree protested. "Even Clelia wasn't quite so less."

"She may have tried to telephone from the station and been unable to get the house. She'll send word back somehow—see."

This encouragement sustained the group till the return of only one of the chauffeurs who was to return. The car others had driven were to be stored in the garages near the station or shipped down to the city. One driver had been ordered to come back for Mrs. Roantree.

He brought with him Miss Fleet, Miss Nancy Fleet. They jolted Larrick's heart a little. He wanted to be loyal to his anxiety for Clelia, to think of her alone. But Miss Fleet by very presence accused him of a disloyalty to herself. For Miss Fleet had been the first New York woman to impress him. He had found her so very New Yorky that she summed up for him the city for him; she seemed exactly typical of it—as if any person or group of persons could typify a city! The Athenians called Minerva their patron goddess, and she represented as minute a portion of the town's femininity as Nancy Fleet represented New York's infinitely various womankind.

Still, Larrick would never get over thinking of New York in terms of Nancy Fleet, for she had dazzled him, startled him, shocked him, delighted him in just the ways he had expected New York women to affect him.

When Clelia Blakeney had swum into his ken, he had found her utterly unlike Miss Fleet, though she was just as thorough of New York New Yorkish. Then Larrick had done what he always do when we find exceptions upsetting our longings for the rule; he had said "The exception proves the rule," and let the dog prove it to his satisfaction.

Larrick had gone pretty far toward an infatuation for Miss Fleet before he was subjected to Clelia's fascinations. Miss Fleet had been too good a sport to protest against his manifest weakness for Clelia; yet it disturbed him to have her on the ground now. For just now his interest in Clelia was invested with a sense of awe, of holiness: of the solemnity that envelops the frivolous of human beings and even pet animals when they are considered in the majestic connotations of death.

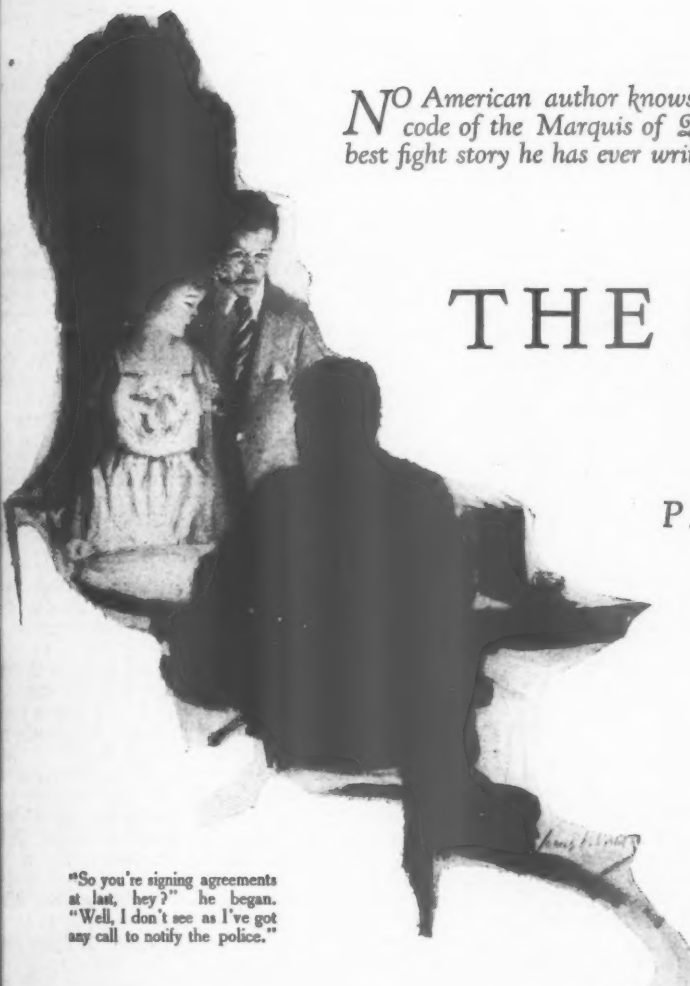
Of course, Clelia might be alive after all, and up to her in characteristic mischief. Larrick's soul was tantalized by the dread that she had played a trick (Continued on page 33)

NO American author knows the technique of the squared ring and the code of the Marquis of Queensberry better than Mr. Terhune. The best fight story he has ever written is—

THE HUNCH

By ALBERT
PAYSON TERHUNE

Illustrated by
JAMES H. CRANK



"So you're signing agreements at last, hey?" he began.
"Well, I don't see as I've got any call to notify the police."

DAVE POLLOCK was still battling in the pork-and-beans division at preliminary fights—and toiling eight hours a day as a puddler's helper in the Ludlow Steel Works—when Johnny Rile discovered him.

A heart with a jazzlike valve had cut short Rile's own career as a promising lightweight, and had led him to the more lucrative managerial end of the fight-game. He was forever looking for promising "comers" to add to his string. And he found one in Dave Pollock—not only a comer, but (what is far rarer in that as in all pursuits) an arriver. And forthwith the fortunes of both fighter and manager took an upward tilt.

When a youth is working all day in a puddler gang, he has scant dash and zip left in his cosmos by nightfall for training or for fighting. Rile changed all that for Dave. With nothing to do but train and build up his hundred and fifty odd pounds of heavy weight into whalebone and whirlwind, the young fellow speedily began to justify the promise that Rile had read in his preliminary work.

The prize-fight game, even in those days, was a tedious climb, varied by many a tumble. Only in the best movies does an unknown beginner slug his way to the championship of the world—or even of his division—in a few spectacular fights.

First must come the dreary stage of boxing in preliminaries—the unimportant bouts which precede the main event of a pugilistic evening; then, if a man be so lucky as to graduate from that slowly start, he must battle his way through an endless army of yellow-aspirants until his prowess wins him a certain popular following. Then he may hope to meet some other man with an equal or greater following—and so on, until his many successive victories force the champion to notice him. Not one

fighter in several hundred has the ability to rise to this eminence. The rest are soon forgotten; most of them deserve to be forgotten.

Under Rile's crafty management Dave Pollock won a tidy array of fights during his first year—fights of gradually increasing importance. He had speed, a pair of inspired hands, a genius for footwork and for distance-gauging, a sickening quality of dynamics behind his blows, and an infinite capacity for taking, as well as for giving, punishment. Moreover he was a born fighter, a man who loved his chosen work, without having any

taint of the brute about him. Such a man the sporting public loves. And Dave's prestige waxed bright.

Life was mighty pleasant nowadays, in spite of the onerous labor of training and the grueling pain and exertion of his frequent fights. In part, life was pleasant because Pollock was doing the thing he liked best to do, and was scoring a hit at it. But chiefly—as he discovered to his own shame-faced amazement—life was pleasant because of one girl.

She was Daisy Rile, the manager's kid sister and housekeeper—a fluffy little slip of a lass who seemed scarce taller or older than a child, but whose baby-blue eyes (two sizes too large for the rest of her flower-face) were offset by a mouth and chin that were steady and firm and all but aggressive.

Dave was living at Johnny Rile's bungalow nowadays, and the barn had been fitted up as a gymnasium. Wherefore he saw much of Daisy, who had but lately come home from convent school to keep house for her big brother.

At first Dave was mortally afraid of this daintily fragile and ornamental wisp of femininity, covertly regarding her with much the same furtive dread that a Great Dane might accord a furry Persian kitten. Daisy had little desire to break the ice of acquaintanceship, and was even inclined to resent Rile's bringing this big shy bruiser to his house. Hitherto she had been allowed to see practically nothing of her brother's string of fighters.

But between Rile and Pollock had sprung up a deep friendship—this apart from all business relations. The two simple, iron-jawed men had by degrees become chums. And Johnny had no qualms about letting his little sister meet the bashful young fighter. Bit by bit Daisy found herself losing her prejudice against Pollock and taking a keen interest in his meteoric rise.

Dave's chronic bashfulness, too, wore thin, so far as Daisy was concerned. In a few weeks they had become good pals. In a few months they were sweethearts.

To Daisy's relieved surprise and to Dave's rapture, Johnny Rile made no objections at all when the two came timidly into his presence after a moonlight stroll one evening, and haltingly broke the news to him that they had just become engaged. Indeed, Rile showed no astonishment at all at the news. Rather he seemed to have been expecting it for some time—for he had his speech letter-perfect, and he unburdened himself of it with barely a single hitch.

"So you're signing agreements at last, hey?" he began. "Well, I don't see as I've got any call to notify the police or get out an injunction, or anything. I'm not saying I'm tickled at losing my baby sister—especially now I got her so she can fry steak the way I like it. But it's a cinch she's too much of a looker not to have been signed up by some man or other before long. And I'm glad she's picked a white man—and a live wire, at that."

Dave sought to give utterance to his gratitude for the blended consent and compliment. His throat voiced a graceful reply. But his lips and tongue went on strike. The result was not unlike the dulcet sounds rendered by a turkey gobbler whose tail-feathers have been grabbed. Johnny Rile continued his oration.

"Marrying wont do you any good, as a fighter, Dave," he pursued. "Jim Jeffries was dead right when he said a man in the ring was best off without a wife to keep taking his mind off his work. But at that, most of the big fellers,—Jeff and Sullivan and Corbett and Fitz and them,—they was all married. Some of 'em quite a lot of times. And they all got to be champs; and held the title a good long while. If marrying don't help a fighter any, it's a cinch that Dave, here, would be worse off if he was to get to moping around, because he couldn't have the girl he was crazy over. It'd crab his work, to beat the band. Best way to get cured of being crazy over a girl, is to marry her. So go to it!"

A GAIN Dave's turkeylike gobble of ecstasy broke in on the harangue. And Daisy ran over to her brother and stood up on the tips of her little toes and kissed Johnny Rile, very prettily, somewhere in the general direction of his mouth.

"When I say 'Go to it!'" hedged the manager, "I mean, go to it as soon as Dave's firm enough on Easy Street to afford such a sparring-partner as you. He's lived clean, and he's saved his cash—what cash there's been, so far, to save. But he's only just getting into his stride. This here fight with Spider Cross next month is due to make or break him. I'm betting more'n I can spare, that it'll make him and break Cross. But before you get to marrying him, kid, suppose you and him wait to see how that match is going to turn out? That's common-sense, aint it?"

"The man who wins this fight," pursued Johnny, "will be in a place where the champ has got to listen to his challenge. The sporting editors will see to that. Dave and Cross are both strong comers. I know the two of 'em. And I know Dave's the best of the two. But Cross isn't any cinch, at that. Spike Hardin is managing him. And Hardin don't waste his time on anything that he can't see profit in. Neither does Cross, for that matter. They're as tidy a pair of crooks as ever sidestepped the hoosgow. But Dave, here, or else Spider Cross, is the next middle-weight champion of the West. That's a cinch. And the one of 'em that wins this fight is the man who is going to fight the champ for that title—and going to win it, too. See if I'm not right. Now, isn't a stake like that worth postponing the billing and cooing for? Isn't it? I put it up to the two of you. Dave's due to commence training day after tomorrow. And—"

"But Johnny!" interposed the girl, succeeding at last in breaking through her brother's flood of words. "You don't understand. I hate to spoil such a perfectly lovely speech. But you began it before we had a chance to tell you. We've settled all that, Dave and I. We aren't going to be married till after he has won the Cross fight. Till then we're just going to forget we're even engaged. He's going to think of nothing but his training. And when he gets into the ring with Cross, he's going to remember he's fighting for his wedding as well as for a chance at the champion. And that is going to make him do all sorts of terrible things to poor Mr. Cross. See if he doesn't. Then, after he wins that fight, there'll be lots of money. And there'll be lots of time while you're posting challenges and certified checks and things, for the champion—and badgering him into giving Dave a match."

"Kid," grinned Rile, "I'll bet my roll that was *your* idea. It's

too clever for Dave to have thought up, all by himself. You're due to have a new manager—for life, at that. As a partner, Daisy's one little marvel, aint she? You'll have your own all right, all right. And it's a cinch you'll obey 'em. Now get off, the pair of you, and leave me to finish balancing this month's check-book of mine. There's only one thing rottener for a row-gauge chap like me than having to balance a check-book—and that is having no check-book to balance. I know, because I've tried both ways. Chase on, now!"

THE projected Pollock-Cross fight created more than ordinary interest amid the sporting element of the Middle West. Both men were recognized as logical contenders for the championship—the present holder of which was known to have "gone back" of late, by reason of a leaning toward strong drink and weak women. Both men had a goodly following. Both were known as spectacular and ferocious fighters. The forthcoming match looked interesting from every angle, and the betting ran high, with the odds slightly on Pollock.

The fact that Cross and his manager Hardin were known to be putting up every cent they could scrape together to cover the Pollock money as fast as it appeared kept the odds from shifting still farther toward Dave. There is nothing like confidence to beget confidence. When the parsimonious Cross was willing to bet so heavily on himself,—and when Hardin was doing the same thing,—many an outsider took the tip as worth following.

The fight was scheduled to occur in a Southwestern State where laws regarding pugilism were lenient. Bernhardt, a little town just within the State's border, was agreed on as the site. Its opposite outskirts of this town the two training camps were forthwith established.

Then, two days after the arrival of Pollock and Rile at this camp, came misfortune. Dave, after supper that day, wandered into town to the post office in the hope of finding there a letter from Daisy. The post-office store was jammed with people, as it always was when the day's single mail was distributed. Pollock worked his way unobtrusively through the noisy and jostling crowd toward the letter-window. Two or three men near the window were quarreling. They were quarrymen laborers and had evidently been celebrating payday by undue potations. Their faces were red and distorted in the dim, smoke-filled light of the room's one big oil lamp.

Dave sought to skirt them as he made for the window. Like the average professional fighter, he had no desire to be mixed up in an amateur fight or even to witness one. A fighter does not believe in giving away what he can sell. Nor does his own perfect art let him derive pleasure from the clumsy tactics of drunken novice battlers.

Vaguely, Pollock was aware that one or two other men had entered the post office at his heels and were moving in his wake toward the window. Then one of the quarrymen struck out bawlingly at another, and a free fight was on.

Some one jostled Dave from behind, shoving him violently forward into the exact center of the milling and bellowing group. Some one else smote the lamp with a stick, putting the smoke-filled room into sudden darkness, while a shower of hot broken glass fell among the tussling and swearing fighters.

At the same instant a pistol-shot smashed through the babel of racket, and a man screeched like a leg-broken horse. The rest was pandemonium.

When the town's four policemen butted into the room, with flash-lamps, a moment later, they found that the bulk of the crowd had been prudent enough to vanish through the wide doors and open windows. Only three men remained, where just now there had been fifty.

Of these three, one was lurching dizzily against a table, trying to stanch the cut made by a fist on his unshaven chin. A second was sprawling and writhing and howling on the filthy floor, adding to its accumulation of tobacco-juice a really creditable amount of blood from a bullet-hole in his shoulder. The third was Dave Pollock, who was kneeling beside the quarryman and trying to tear loose the wet shirt from his wound.

The victim was taken to the local hospital. Dave and the other cut man were marched to the police station. There they were searched, in the natural course of investigation. In the pocket of Dave's coat was found a thirty-eight-caliber revolver with one of its chambers empty and its barrel fouled—and the bullet in the wounded man's shoulder proved to be of the same caliber.

Came forward, right sheepishly, a witness—one Dugan, a down-at-heel resident of Bernhardt—who testified, under pressure, that



"Oh, I knew it! I knew it!" she panted. "I knew it when he went into the ring! And I knew it when I heard the crowd going wild!"

he had been in the post office at the time of the shooting. He said he had seen Dave approach the group just as the quarreling men had come to blows; he had seen one of the brawlers strike Pollock, whether accidentally or otherwise—and he had seen the pugilist whip a pistol from his pocket. Then the light had gone out—and the witness had very prudently followed its example.

This he said; this he swore to. Nor could the outraged and bewildered Pollock or the equally dismayed Rile or a hastily employed local lawyer shake his statement in the least.

Now, the good little town of Bernhardt was just then in the throes of a reform wave of the most virulent description. Like other places in the Southwest, it was heartily sick of being looked on as a primitive community of border ruffians and was bent on proving its progress and its law-abiding civilization to the world at large. Moreover two recent shootings had brought the place into an unenvied prominence in the newspapers. The State, at the last session of its legislature, had sought to curb the prevalence of manslaughter by enacting drastic laws against the carrying of concealed weapons.

All of this was too heavy a handicap for Dave's manager and Dave's best legal talent to overcome. Public sentiment was dead against the prisoner, and he was haled to trial within a week after the shooting.

Court chanced to be sitting in Bernhardt at the time. The trial was brief; and all Rile's array of lawyers could do no more than mitigate the severity of the sentence. David Pollock was duly convicted of the double felony of attempted homicide and of having on his person a concealed weapon; and he was sentenced to three years at hard labor in the State penitentiary.

"If it hadn't been for that gorgeous little girl who sat beside Pollock all the time, holding his hand in both of hers," lamented the prosecuting attorney, "Judge Shelp would have given him the maximum. The Judge has a mushy place in his heart for good-looking women."

Dave's lawyer offered final consolation when the motion for a new trial was refused.

"The warden, down at Logan, is a mighty good friend of mine," he said, "—a lodge brother, in fact. There is a heap of difference in the jobs he hands out to prisoners. I reckon I can persuade him to put you in the prison laundry or maybe in the library or in the accounting department. He—"

"You can get him to put me in any department you want to?" asked Dave, rousing himself from the apathy that nowadays wrapped his very soul.

"Why—in reason, yes. I'll try to get you a cinch job in—"

"Then get him to put me in the prison foundry!" commanded Pollock, his dull eyes glowing in brief eagerness.

"In the foundry?" echoed the lawyer. "Why, man alive, that's the toughest place in the prison, for hard work. It's torture. Men get assigned to that as punishment for—"

"Make him put me there," insisted Dave, "—or I'll do something that'll send me there for punishment. In the foundry—and at work with the heaviest sledge in the place! Do as I tell you to!"

Thus it was that the Pollock-Cross fight did not eventuate. Spider Cross and his manager turned the air blue with their blasphemous laments at its collapse. Nevertheless they pocketed the "non-appearance" forfeit money—a goodly sum—and divers large "non-appearance" bets which they had made at long odds in case Pollock should refuse at the last minute to meet so redoubtable an opponent. They even collected the "postponement" forfeit from Rile, though they had to go to court to get it. Altogether they left Bernhardt with a tidy sum of money, between them, by way of a consolation purse.

Oddly enough, from that hour Spider Cross' luck took a swift

turn for the better. In less than a year he had cleared away the husky contenders and had forced the champion to accept the challenge. In the ninth round of that long-desired fight the worthy champion was battered into senselessness, and Spider Cross became thus the loudly hailed middleweight champion of the West.

Spider Cross had reached the summit of the local ladder, the first goal of his high hopes. And at once he began upon the final climb—by challenging the middleweight champion of the world, an Eastern slugger whose many losses were already causing his once peerless shoulders to sag a little.

To fill in the time, while the sporting editors were bawling and nagging the reluctant world-champion to come out of his solitude and meet this promising new contender from the West, Cross made a theatrical tour as a star-adjunct to a burlesque show whose twice-a-day performance made up in breadth for what it lacked in depth. This engagement finished, the world-champion still coquetting as to terms, Cross and his manager forthwith began to look about them for other easy coin.

A popular fighter has but a short time at best to gather his golden harvest. And while his vogue was still at its height, Cross was determined to wring from it every available dollar—a thrifty ambition in which his manager eagerly seconded him. The middleweight championship of the world would of course be a gold mine—should Cross win it. But no fight is won until the referee's decision is given. A clumsy blow, a miscalculation, any of a dozen happenings, might make Cross lose his forthcoming championship battle; and in that case his efficiency as a money-maker would instantly drop by at least seventy per cent.

But for the moment much money was his for the asking. And he asked. In other words, he put Brady to work looking for one or two choice "set-up" fights for him—mainly to keep him in condition and to while away the time until the world-champion should deign to accept his challenge.

A "set-up" fight has long been a recognized method whereby a champion may annex extra money if no extra fame. Here is the method of procedure: Some lesser fighter, lured by a generous cash offer or by the long-shot hope of victory, is induced by a sporting club to go into the ring with the champion. The lure of the latter's name usually assures big gate-receipts. The champion, taking of course the lion's share of gate-money and purse, fights his luckless opponent to a pulp in a very few rounds. For an easy and safe evening's work he receives a snug bankroll. It is one of the pleasantest and most profitable of pugilist's by-products.

There is, of course, always the off chance that the contender may win the bout, and incidentally the championship. But a wary champion minimizes this chance to the point of nothingness. He knows all about the man he is to meet. Unless he is assured of the other's proven inferiority to himself, he will not enter the ring with him. He takes no risks, but safeguards every step of the transaction. And that, naturally, is why very few championships, in the long history of the ring, have changed hands by reason of a set-up fight.

The first of these wealth-annexing encounters which Haines arranged for his champion was at the annual athletic carnival held during Fair Week, in the thriving farm-center metropolis of Prairieville. The farming season had been a record breaker. To Prairieville, for Fair Week, flocked thousands of prosperous agrarians, their pockets heavy with money and their minds set on spending it for "a good time."

These men had read of the great Spider Cross. They had read with guilty enthusiasm, of prizefights. They were willing and eager to pay record prices for the privilege of seeing what was advertised by the promoters as a championship battle. The



"What d'you think you're in? A barroom scrap? Stand off and box."

athletic Pavilion was sold out at a premium a week before the date scheduled for the bout.

Cross' hand-picked opponent for this well-staged farce was one "Battling Brady," a man who five years earlier had seemed a likely candidate for welterweight honors. Through drink and other causes he had started downhill, and had put on too much flesh to remain in the welter division. So he called himself a middleweight, although he still had his first fight to win in that class. He had degenerated into a chopping-block for ambitious young semi-amateurs.

The promise of more cash than he had earned in the past year readily induced Brady to challenge Cross to this "championship battle." He knew well what was expected of him. He knew Cross would permit him to stay on his feet for perhaps five rounds of futile and spectacular boxing and then would knock him out—sending ninety per cent of the audience away with the firm conviction that they had just witnessed a most bloodthirsty and stoutly contested fight, wherein the issue had hung in doubt up to the very last punch.

Brady, in the billing and in the press-accounts, was heralded as the fair-goer as one of the best and most dangerous middleweights in America. Yes, the stage was well set. And the gate money swept in, wave on golden wave.

The fight was advertised for ten o'clock, on the last night of the fair. Three mildly amateurish preliminary bouts filled in the earlier hours of the evening and kept the unsophisticated spectators awake. Then, when the third of these slapping contests had dragged itself to a tame conclusion, the audience drew a deep multiple breath of anticipation. Now would begin the terrific and murderous conflict they had spent their earnings to behold. But—nothing happened.

Thousands of eager eyes were strained toward the stairway from the dressing-rooms for a first glimpse of one or both of the human tigers; but no human tigers emerged. The crowd began to whistle, then to stamp, then to growl. This last is not reassuring manifestation—especially in a crowd of law-abiding men. Meanwhile, in the little nest of dressing-rooms under the arena there was trouble—in wholesale quantities.

Spider Cross had been lolling at ease on the rubbing-table of the rough-boarded and stuffy little "main dressing-room," talking idly with Hardin over the latter's highly gratifying report of the final total to which the gate-receipts had mounted. Cross was stirred for the fray in socks and fighting shoes, and in a pair of the trunks belted by an American flag. Over this demitoid he had flung a woolly dressing gown as precaution against draughts. His handlers were grouped outside the door in the narrow passage, smoking and whispering. On the floor was an array of bottles and towels designed to impress onlookers with the professionalism of the fray.

"If we could make a clean sweep like this twice a year," Hardin was purring as he glanced again at the slip of figures hanging from between his monkey fingers, "the world's championship could go to blue jeans, for all of me. There's more dough in—"

"Brady showed up yet?" interrupted Cross. "I thought he was coming in here for his instructions. Or did you see him in his dressing-room? He—"

"No," said Hardin, looking at his watch, "I haven't seen him. I told him to report to me the minute he got here. He must 'a' forgot and gone straight to his dressing-room. He's got the next one to this, on the right. Hey, Brady!" he continued, raising his thick voice a little to pierce the flimsy boarding that separated the rooms. "Chase in here, like I told you to!"

There was no answer to the summons. Before Hardin could repeat his call, the door burst open. In scrambled panting and perspiring man in evening dress—Saul Mellito, manager of the athletic carnival.

"Here's a hell of a note!" sputtered the newcomer. "The beans are spilled for fair! Brady's just phoned me he's got a broken right wrist. Fell upstairs or something, he says. He can't show up. So when he left the doctor's, he beat it for the ten o'clock main. Afraid to face us, I s'pose. He phoned me from the station."

The last part of Mellito's tidings fell on ears deaf with horror. "He's beat it?" repeated Hardin in a falsetto scream, while Cross upreared himself from his reclining posture on the table and scowled incredulously at the flustered visitor. "He's beat it? But good Lord, man, he can't—"

"But good Lord, man, he *has*!" shouted Mellito. "Don't you see the hole it puts us into? Think of that crowd upstairs! They've paid more to see this fight than they'd pay to see the Battle of the Marne. And they aren't the kind who sit by and let themselves be cheated. They've got to have action for their money. If they don't get it, they'll get us! We—"

"Run out, send out scouts, hustle till you find some chap who'll take Brady's place!" exhorted Hardin, his wits beginning to work again. "Anybody'll do—anybody who can put up a bluff at fighting for a round or so. Tell him Cross'll go light with him, and fake the knockout. Tell him—"

"Nothing doing!" wailed the promoter. "That's the first thing I thought of. Can't be done. I don't know a professional fighter in this whole town. I don't even know if there is one. If there is, he's most likely upstairs in the audience, waiting for—"

"All right, then," put in Cross. "Make an announcement from the ring. Say Brady's hurted himself and that I'll meet any man in the audience, at catch-weights. It's a cinch none of 'em are topnotchers or in halfway condition, either. Say that I'll—"

"Nothing doing!" croaked Mellito again. "I'd thought of that too. Can't be done. Look here! We advertised there'd be a championship battle—for the middleweight championship of the West—between you and Battling Brady. We touted him as one of the greatest middleweights in America. This farming crowd fell for it. They paid out their cash to see a championship scrap between two famous middleweights, not to see the champion play punching-bag with some untrained amachoor dub in the audience. They'd never stand for it in a thousand years. I know 'em. They'll wreck the place. Then they'll pool their interests and bring civil suits against me and against the carnival committee and against the two of you, to get their money back. And they'll get it, too. It'll be rotten publicity for both of you, and it'll put our carnival committee out of business for keeps."

"But what in blazes else can we do?" quavered Hardin, beginning to sweat profusely. "What else can—"

"There's one thing else you can do, gentlemen," drawled a pleasant voice from the doorway. "I've got a man here whose name was a sight better known, hereabouts, a year or two ago, than Brady's or even Cross'. Most of that crowd upstairs will remember him, and they'll be willing to let him go on in Brady's place. How about it?"

Johnny Rile stood lounging carelessly on the threshold as he made his quiet announcement, ignoring the dumfounded stares of Cross and Hardin.

"How about it?" (Continued on page 184)



Cross' knees turned to hot tallow. His chin dropped, and he dropped with it. . . . The referee's semaphore arm counted him out.

"**H**E knows women." That is what women say of the author of this story. One wonders if they speak truthfully—or are they simply trying to throw men—even the author—off the track? Anyway—

YOU NEVER KNOW YOUR WIFE

By
GEORGE WESTON

Illustrated by
WILL GREFFÉ

FROM the day he was born, it was prophesied that Samson Maynard was going to make his mark so high in the world of commerce that future generations of business Napoleons would have to get a ladder to reach it. After the stork had flown away, old Doc Chase went to the head of the stairs and called down: "You can come up now, if you want to, Abner!"

If he wanted to! The Doctor hadn't finished speaking, when Abner was halfway up the stairs, carrying the butter-scales proudly in front of him. Indeed, such was his haste, his pride and his natural excitement, that he tripped over the top step and dropped the scales, falling over them and straining the spring.

Now, this may sound like a small thing in itself, but you wouldn't have thought so if you had been in the room a few minutes later when Abner's son was placed on the scales and the pointer turned to 12.

"Tell you what I'm going to do, Doc," said Abner as soon as he had his Adam's apple under control again: "This aint no sort of a child to be taken out in butter and eggs. I'm going to pay you for him right now—cash money!"

At that time of the world's history the general admission fee was ten dollars; Abner was counting out the money when his cup of joy, nearly full before, was suddenly filled to the brim.

"Look, Doc!" he whispered, his eyes almost popping out of his head. "I swanny if he aint counting the money too, as if he wanted to see how much he was settin' me back!"

And in truth—no matter what might have been the chance behind it—Abner's son had his eyes fixed upon his father's roll in a manner which some might deem precocious.

"Look, Doc!" whispered Abner again, nearly beside himself. "Wont he make a great business man when he grows up? Watch, now! I'm going to drop a dollar, and see if he notices it!"

The dollar fluttered to the floor, and whether it was the movement of the money that did it, or the expression of Abner's face—which was quite enough—or a cause outside of mortal ken, the baby suddenly lifted its voice and wept.



Marriage had made Helen more beautiful, more bewitching, than ever.

If Abner had been subject to apoplexy, he would probably have died right then and there. They had to send him down stairs, and he took up his station at the chopping-block near the fence. There, whenever a team came into sight, he held up his hand like a traffic cop on Broadway; and presently Lottie upstairs, heard fragments like these:

"Yes sir! Twelve pounds and nearly a quarter!"

"I want to know!"

"Yep. Doctor said he'd sign the paper. Saw him count the money, too!"

"Oh, get out!"

"Heh! You ask Doc Chase. He stood there watching my baby with eyes like sarsars. 'Abner,' says he to me, 'this aint no ordinary baby you've got here. This is a future bank cashier and gosh, he'll make a good one!' And say, Eph. You know what that child of mine did when I accidental' dropped a dollar on the floor?"

"Jumped right off the bed, and picked it up, I guess, and put it in his little pants' pocket?"

"By guy, he would of, if he could of," said Abner earnestly. "He hollered blue murder and p'inted right down to it! I tell you, Eph, when that boy of mine grows up, I'm going to send him to New York to trim old Jay Gould's whiskers for him. You see if I don't!"

Yes; all afternoon Lottie lay and heard bits like that; and along toward evening when Abner went tip-toeing up for the third or sixth time, she heard something else.

"Sleep, Lottie?" he whispered from the doorway.

She slowly turned her head and smiled at him, proud of his pride, happy in his happiness as well as her own.

"I been thinking," he said. "We was going to call him Abner same as me. But seeing he's such a humdinger, I think we ought to call him Samson—same as that feller in the Bible."

If there is anything in premonitions, it may have been the premonition swept over Lottie. Or perhaps she had always been thinking of a time in the future which every mother thinks about with an aching heart—when her baby boy will be a man and meet that woman who sooner or later comes into every man's life—that woman who will lead him up to the gates of heaven and down to you-know-where.

"I don't know," she said, a shadow passing over her day of days. "Wasn't it Samson who was mixed up with some woman who cut his hair and made him feeble?"

"Don't you worry about this one! He'll never let any woman cut his hair!"

For the second time that day he went down on his knees by the side of the bed, his arm around his greatest treasures. "Lottie and little Samson!" he whispered, and that was the first long step of our hero's pilgrimage along that great journey which is sometimes called life. . . .

If Abner's cows could have thrived on the scenery around Beacon Hill, his milk-checks would have made him a millionaire. But outside of views so beautiful that they looked unreal, his farm was of such a nature that it stood on the assessor's books at four dollars an acre, and he often kicked like a steer at that.

So to make both ends meet Lottie turned the scenery into money by taking summer

boarders; and the first and last she ever took were Professor Guildson and his baby Helen.

The Professor looked like Oliver Wendell Holmes in middle life, and had such a fund of information about the stars and the rocks and the worlds and the mysteries of life that Abner could have listened to him by the hour with his mouth open—and often did when he should have been cultivating corn. The Professor's wife had died the winter before he appeared on Beacon Hill, leaving him with the baby—a poor, pale little thing that looked as though it would soon follow its mother.

It is a well-known fact, however, that appearances are deceitful; and when September came around, Helen had grown into such a pink and pretty little picture that it was finally decided that instead of going back to New York, she should stay on the farm in the hope that she would grow up into a sort of a British Hercules.

At that time Samson was ten years old, and it wasn't long before it became one of his chores to mind the baby. At first he did it sourly and with the expression of one who is taking quinine; but when Helen grew old enough to walk and talk to him, he tolerated her and sometimes even smiled, though gravely, at the things she tried to tell him.

Meanwhile at school he was following his studies with the same concentration with which he did almost everything else; and at home he worked around the farm, listened to his father's prophecies and possibly grew to think himself predestined. The

summer after he was graduated from the Free Academy, Professor Guildson found an opening for him in the city.

"The Mariners' Ocean Insurance Company—I know the president well," he said. "Nine dollars a week to start, and after that it depends upon the boy himself."

"In New York?" asked Lottie, looking troubled.

"Yes—an easy address to remember—200 Wall Street."

To Abner this was the finger of destiny, clearly displayed for a moment in that small room. There was many a talk about it, but it finally came to the immemorial ending—age not wishing to stand in the way of youth, and youth on fire to see the world and win its golden spurs. Helen listened as though unconcerned, but on the night before Samson was to leave for the city, she climbed on his knee and cried as though her heart would break. "Don't go!" she kept saying. "Don't go!"

But early the next morning Abner drove them down to the



"What do you think of this new dress?" she asked. "A beauty—and a beauty's wearing it," he answered.

station. When the train pulled out, Samson stood on the back platform, and they waved their hands as long as they could see him, and then they watched the vanishing train.

"Toh!" said Abner, blowing his nose in a masterful manner. "Don't you worry, Lottie. Any boy who has had you for a mother, he aint going very far wrong."

In the distance the train disappeared around a curve; and that was the second long step which Samson took in his unconscious search for that woman who sooner or later comes into every man's life—that woman who will either take him up to the gates of heaven, or down to you-know-where. . . .

Every summer Samson went home for at least part of his vacation; and when he started in business for himself—"Samson A. Maynard & Co., Marine Insurance Agents"—the first letter he wrote on his printed stationery was addressed to Beacon Hill.

Abner didn't do much work the day he received that letter. All the morning he admired it and crowded over it to Lottie; and all afternoon he spent at Cantwell's blacksmith's shop and crowded over it to the people.

"Didn't I allus say he'd do it?" he kept asking. "Why, the very day that boy was born, old Doc Chase, he says to me: 'Abner,' says he, 'this aint no ordinary baby you've got here. This is the future president of the N'York, N'Haven & Hartford—and gosh, he'll make a good one!'"

Helen was as proud as any of them. Although you could hardly call her a girlish Hercules, she fairly bloomed with health; and if Samson had been a noticer of such things, he would have seen that every summer she grew more and more beautiful, like a painting slowly being brought to perfection by a master hand. But Samson was too much wrapped up in destiny to look for beauty. When one who wishes to be a champion is playing the game of his life, he doesn't let his eye wander far from the ball.

As time went on, the business of Maynard & Company flourished like the green bay tree. A foreign forwarding department was added, then an ocean freight department; new offices were rented, new clerks were hired. Samson began to travel, and in one of his trips to South Africa he came across that trail which every business man hopes to find some day—that trail which is made up of a long line of parallel bars with a capital S wrapped around them,—thus: \$\$\$\$\$\$,—that trail which nothing but a million dollars can make, and is generally only found by those who have been smiled upon by the fairies.

It was a new type of rear axle for motor vehicles—an axle, of such superiority that even Samson could see its possibilities. The inventor was still struggling with his patents and trying to keep his head above the financial waters which were threatening to drown him. Samson, on a speculation, paid him two thousand dollars down for the American rights, and agreed to pay him another ten thousand as soon as the patents were granted, and a royalty on each one made.

"I ought to make a net profit of ten dollars on every one sold, easily," he told Abner and Lottie on his return, "and there ought to be a market for at least fifty thousand of them every year."

"That's half a million dollars a year," said Abner in awe-struck tones; and almost fiercely turning to Lottie, he demanded: "Didn't I allus tell you he'd do it—right from the day he was born? I seen it in him!"

"But don't tell anybody," said Samson, "not even Helen. It's a secret yet, and I don't want everybody laughing at me if it falls through."

"I know how to keep my mouth shet," said Abner proudly, "I never knew Lottie yet to spill any beans."

As you have probably noticed, Helen wasn't in this conference. When she was sixteen, she had gone to New York to finish her education, and when that was completed to the satisfaction of everyone concerned, she kept house for her father, who never married again. They had an apartment overlooking Madison Park, and now and then Samson paid them a visit. Outside of meeting Helen, he didn't greatly enjoy it. The people he met there spoke a language and followed customs that were strange to him.

"My game is making money," he told Helen one night after his return from South Africa, "not talking about 'Chatterbox,' or hanging around with a little teacup in my hand."

"I think you're wonderful," she told him in a low voice. The words weren't so much, but there was just the least little vibration in her voice; and even as a certain note played on the piano will sometimes set the chandelier trembling, so now Samson felt a disturbance under the lefthand side of his plated shirt.

"Do you know what I can't understand?" he suddenly asked her.

"No; tell me."

"I can't understand why you haven't married long ago." She was in full regalia, which was disturbing enough, but when she turned her eyes to Samson, he knew that something important was taking place.

"Perhaps I've been waiting for the right man," she said in such a low voice that he could hardly hear her. "And now that I tell you what I can't understand?"

"Do."

"I can't understand how you, the most wonderful man I ever knew, have remained single so long."

Again she looked at him, and this time he felt a sort of little stagger.

"Perhaps I've been waiting for the right girl," he managed to say at last.

"Do you think you'll know her when you find her?"

He was very sure of that.

"And how will the girl know?"

Unconsciously he drew a breath that was like a sigh. "I shall kiss her," he said.

He kissed her then—rather well, too, for the first time; and that was the third long step of our hero's pilgrimage over that great journey which is sometimes called life. . . .

Like every other son of Adam, Samson had his first qualm of uneasiness toward the end of the honeymoon. They had gone to the White Mountains, and on the night of question it had seemed to him that a shadow of disappointment had passed over Helen because he couldn't dance.

"You know, honey," he said to her, "I'm afraid you'll find me a solemn old owl at times."

"Indeed I sha'n't!" she cried with appropriate accompaniment.

"I'm afraid you will, though. I can't dance—nor talk very well; and I can't play golf or tennis or anything like that. But if you'll only be patient with me, I'll try to make it up to you in other ways. There's one thing I can do pretty well, you know. I can make money."

On their return to the city they took an apartment on Riverside Drive. The new place made Samson the least bit thoughtful, but when he saw the interior decorator's bill he forgot the rent.

Helen was radiant.

"I've always wanted beautiful things," she whispered to him. "You've no idea how happy you're making me. Isn't it beautiful, though?"

It was indeed a decorator's dream, a fitting bower for love and life and beauty; and as to its cost, even as soldiers learn to say, "Oh, well, that's war," so now Samson soon found himself saying: "Oh, well, that's being married." In fact, as time went on, he grew proud of his ability to provide such things for his wife, proud of her dresses with the French labels and of her fondness for pearls and shimmering lace.



"Perhaps I've been waiting for the right man," she said.

As you can imagine, Helen's father was a frequent visitor at their apartment. Old friends of the family also began to call. Among them was Stanley de Vincent, a young professor of Romance literature, who was a sort of a fourth cousin of Helen's. He had a keen, eager look, dressed well, wrote good poetry and talked socialism in a manner that would have charmed birds off the trees, if they could only have understood him. There was a middle-aged professor of philosophy who sometimes made Samson wonder whether he was alive—or merely thought he was alive, living in a mad, mad world of dreams. There was a young doctor who could play the piano like Paderewski, tell a story like Henry Irving and make a Welsh rabbit that Savarin himself might have envied.

At first Samson was jealous of them all, even those who were married and brought their wives. He was jealous of their chatter, jealous of their music, jealous of their dancing and laughter; but most of all he was jealous of the way in which they sometimes followed Helen around with their eyes. Still, he was wise enough not to show it, and as time went on, he began to feel easier in his mind and rather lorded it over them. He never abated his jealousy of De Vincent, though, with his parlor lectures on socialism and his confounded poems on that happy state of affairs which was awaiting mankind just around the corner when everything was to be free as the air, even including such small items as love.

One afternoon Samson came home early to take Helen to a concert, and somehow they started talking about De Vincent.

"Did he ever ask you to marry him?" asked Samson.

"Oh, my dear, he was a pest!"

If anything, marriage had made Helen more beautiful, more bewitching than ever; and as Samson looked at her, a deep wave of pride and love and humility swept over him.

"I don't see what you ever saw in a quiet old dub like me," he sighed.

"You aren't old, and you aren't a dub," she quickly told him; and in a lower voice she added: "Oh, Samson, don't you see? They play their little tricks, and then they are through."

But you—you play the most wonderful game of all. You take a handful of nothing, and turn it into money, and give it to me to spend; and I think you're the finest, grandest, splendoriest—"

This sentence was lost in a tableau.

"Do you love me?" she whispered.

"Love you?" He grappled for the right word

and suddenly found it waiting for him. "I'm crazy over you!"

"Really crazy?"

His soul being bare, he answered: "Crazy as a loon!"

"And you never think I'm just a little spendthrift, do you?"

"I only wish I had a million dollars for you to spend!"

"Never mind. I know you will have—some day."

He told her then for the first time about the axle.

"I didn't tell you before," he concluded, "because it might have come to nothing, but the inventor expects his patents any month now. We ought to make ten dollars on every one we sell, and we certainly ought to sell fifty thousand a year."

"But Samson!" she gasped, her eyes round with wonder. "That would be half a million dollars a year!"

"Just about."

She kissed him with a sudden intensity which he had never known in her before, a revelation which made him uneasy when he thought it over; and he asked himself the question which man has asked since time immemorial: "This woman that I call my wife—does she love me for myself, or for what I've got?"



"I believe my big, strong Samson has one of those enormous deals on, and he's going to make his million dollars before Christmas."

The more he thought it over, the more uneasy he felt. The war talk in Europe was beginning to sound an ominous note. Already there had been a substantial falling off of business, and Helen's bills for the last few months were greater than ever!

The telephone interrupted his reflections and gave him something else to think about.

"Mr. De Vincent is calling."

"Damn De Vincent!" thought Samson, his brow darkening; and that was the fourth long step of our hero's pilgrimage—a journey in which he was now following the woman who, sooner or later, comes into every man's life, and who will either lead him up to the gates of heaven or down to you-know-where. . . .

The war broke out that summer.

"It can't last more than a few months," thought Samson uneasily, and was glad to find that nearly everyone agreed with him. In fact, the duration of the war wasn't far from being a mortal matter to the firm of Maynard & Company. The greater part of their business was connected with the Far Eastern trade, and almost overnight that trade had ceased to be.

"I only wish I was a business man these days," said De Vincent one evening.

"Why?" demanded Samson with a look that should have killed. "Because of the money which I could make out of the war. Big business men always do, if you take notice."

Helen gave her husband a proud and private smile that seemed to say: "If any business man is going to make money out of this war, I know one who will!"

"Hm!" said Samson, and they thought he looked mysterious.

For the next few weeks he felt that great things were expected of him, and he gasped at the edge of visions.

"If I had a million dollars and bought a lot of steel—" or, "If I had a big factory somewhere, and could get a contract for army rifles—" But as you have probably guessed by now, Samson was far from having a million dollars; and he certainly had no factory, large or otherwise, to earn himself sinews of war.

"Oh, well," he always concluded, "the war can't last much longer."

BUT with the coming of spring it dawned upon mankind that, instead of drawing to an end, the war was only just commencing. De Vincent was in great glee.

"This is the end of the old order and the beginning of a socialistic world," he said. "The old order changeth, and gives place to the new."

It also gave him the idea of a book of poetry to be called, "The Old Order Changeth" and subtitled, "Poems of Protest." Somewhat to his own surprise, the book was accepted, and perhaps because most of the verses would never have seen type in Mr. Comstock's time, "The Old Order Changeth" attained a vogue, and Professor de Vincent soon found himself promoted to the front rank of parlor socialists.

"I'm so pleased for Stanley's sake," said Helen. "He was always so keen to get on."

"Yes, yes—splendid!" said Samson. The words were hearty, but his voice wasn't. It had seemed to him lately that the whole world was advancing, and only himself going back.

"One thing sure, though," he told himself. "It can't last very much longer."

It did, though. It lasted so long that finally he had to retrench at the office—slowly at first and then with increasing speed. Once he nearly told Helen, but he couldn't bring himself to the point. To her he had always been the strong, silent man of business. "That or nothing," he now thought with a grimace; and it isn't pleasant for any man to confess to his wife that he is nothing. He had always looked down upon her friends as hare-brained, amusing triflers, worthy now and then perhaps of a condescending nod from Jove, but certainly entitled to nothing more than that.

"And now they are making out better than I am," he thought. "It's wicked the money De Vincent is getting out of that rotten book."

His manner was so preoccupied that Helen noticed it and wondered.

"Do you know what I believe?" she asked, perching on his knee and shaking her finger at him.

"No—tell me."

"I believe my big, strong Samson has one of those enormous business deals on, and he's going to make his million dollars before Christmas."

At that he laughed with relief. At the sound of his merriment she regarded him intently, her head on one side like a bird.

"You're sure nothing is worrying you down at the office, dear?" she asked at a venture.

For an imperceptible moment he hesitated, and then he told her his first lie.

"Nothing at all," he said. "Everything's fine—fine."

And that was the fifth long step of our hero's pilgrimage over that long journey which is sometimes called life.

IT pleased Helen, that winter, to "go in strong" for socialism. Perhaps De Vincent had something to do with it, or perhaps she was merely following a crave for intellectual activity which in an earlier age would have led her to Browning or spiritualism. Whatever the cause, her apartment gradually became the meeting-place for intently serious young women—who felt they had a mission something like Joan of Arc's, but didn't care what it was as long as it didn't lead to housework—and equally serious young men who liked to say, "There aren't many of us here, you know, but when you come right down to numbers, there were only twelve Apostles."

Helen's distant cousin was generally the lion of these occasions.

De Vincent's vogue had grown. His name not only appeared on the papers, but he had coined a rather strange expression which may some day pass into history, to wit: "Private Ownership is Public Theft."

At first Samson argued with Helen.

"But don't you think it's a beautiful idea," she asked, "to own everything in common?"

"How would you like to be owned in common," he felt tempted to ask her, but instead he said: "I think that's the system which most savage tribes follow—perhaps what makes them savage," added with unexpected humor.

"No, but seriously, dear, don't you think it would stop war if there was no such thing as private ownership?"

"I think it's the very thing that would start men fighting," he said. A bit of old Abner showed in him. "Back on the farm, for instance, the roosters had everything in common, and you never saw such fighting in your life."

She pulled his ears. "Of course, if you argue like that," she said, and seemed quite disappointed in him.

But Samson had too many troubles of his own to be bothered with socialism. Downtown he was just managing to make enough to keep both ends together.

"If I can only hang on, somehow, till the war's over," he said, "I'll be all right."

But suddenly Russia went to pieces, and in the months that followed, he not only saw his business growing quieter at the office, but he heard the socialists growing louder at home.

"Private Ownership is Public Theft." That seemed to be the battle-cry, with "Bolshevism" and "Soviets" for shibboleths. You couldn't pronounce these words with just the right bang, you confessed yourself a novice, and they all took a whack at you. With the growth of his reputation, De Vincent was growing saturnine and somewhat imperious in his manner. One day a strange thought occurred to Samson.

"If they ever try to start anything over here," he said, "I propose he thinks he will be the dictator." And in spite of his troubles, Samson laughed to himself.

Still, if you had seen him downtown those days, you would have begrudged him that one laugh. In a final effort to save his trenchment he threw his office lease to the wolves and took a room in the old Perry Building.

"This war is going to last longer than I expected," he told himself, "and every day is going to count after a while."

Again Helen noticed how quiet he was growing.

"That business of yours will be the death of you yet," she scolded him one night. "Now, you get dressed, and we'll go and see a play. It will give you something else to think about."

The play they saw had one of those splendid heroes who handle everything they touch with a sort of divine carelessness, passing on from height to height to a last grand, rapturous climax.

"There's never been anything like that in my life," thought Samson with a sigh. By which he meant that he had never been backed into a corner by murderous odds only to save himself by rapier-like thrusts of mind and muscle, had never entered dangerous places in disguise, had never suddenly thrown back his head and exclaimed: "Yes, damn you, it is I—Richard Carrington!"

"Nothing but drudgery in my life," thought Samson with another sigh. "And what am I going to get for it in the end?"

THE answer came sooner than he had expected.

He was verifying his bank-balance the next day when a young man entered the office—pale, serious and wearing tortoiseshell glasses.

"Mr. Maynard in?" he asked.

"I am Mr. Maynard."

In silence the young man handed him a summons and compelled him to an action for rent under the old lease which Samson had thrown to the wolves; and fastened to the summons was a legal notice that his account in the Export National Bank had been attached pending the determination of the action.

"Done for!" thought Samson with a sinking heart. "And I can't keep it from her any longer."

That afternoon he did a lot of writing. He was still at the desk when the door opened again and the letter-carrier handed him two foreign envelopes.

The first was from Port Elizabeth.

"Dear Mr. Maynard," he read. "My axle patent has just been granted and within the next ten days I will send you working drawings and manufacturer's license attached to sight draft for \$10,000."

"I congratulate you upon the favorable (Continued on page 43)



"I reckon you know me well enough to know that if I bring a lady's name in, I have good reason to."

BILL TITUS EKE BUTTS IN

By J. FRANK DAVIS

Illustrated by
CLARK FAY

HAVING considered the five cards dealt him by Chief of Police Phil Ewing, President Reese Warland of the Summerton National Bank pushed forward the pot at this reasonable figure because everybody present was more or less his friend and he had no desire to impoverish good fellows.

"Fair enough!" Doctor Bannister conceded, tossing in two browns. "Even benevolent! That is, it would sound benevolent if you wasn't a flinty-hearted old crook without even a rudimentary bowel of compassion."

Joe Ansell, real-estate dealer, also contributed two dollars, murmuring as he did so that the Doctor expressed very beautifully the opinion of the assembled company. It came the turn of Captain Bill Titus, who smiled widely.

"All of which enables me to get a little play," he proclaimed with pronounced satisfaction. "I should say, in this hand, it is worth at least seven dollars to draw cards. I therefore advance two brown seeds and eke five more."

"Eke!" echoed Phil Ewing, throwing away a pair of fours without regret. "Ol' Bill Titus, gentleman and scholar! I know it aint Mex. Is it French or something? Where do you get that eke, Bill?"

"It's from the classics," the Captain assured him, and quoted:

"John Gilpin was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke was he
Of famous London town."

"A perfectly good word *eke* is. Means *also*, *further*, *besides*,

moreover, over and above. Also to boot. What is this, a lesson in English literature or a poker-session? What you doing, Reese?"

"I'm listening to you trying to win a pot by dazing us with language. If you hadn't made so much talk about it, I'd prob'ly lay down these three of a kind that opened it. As she stands, I'll see the raise, and it's a cinch you draw one card. Is it a four-flush or only a straight?"

"Two pairs," Bill told him with every show of candor. "Isn't that the way to play two pairs—raise before the draw and drive the pikers out? You have to play 'em sometime, and they aint much good after the draw. See!" he declared joyously as both Doctor Bannister and Joe Ansell, with varying comments, declined to stand the raise and ditched their hands. "Don't that prove it? If we'd let them stay in, they'd prob'ly have bettered and beat us. Now that there's only you and me to debate it, you can give me one card."

Warland himself took two without hesitating, and without looking at either of them bet ten dollars. "I had your li'l ol' two pairs beat going in," he declared. "If you bettered, come back at me, and we'll look 'em over and see what to do next."

"I did," Bill told him. "She's gone up ten more."

Reese now took time to survey all his cards, and considered thoughtfully. "All right," he said shortly, and pushed in his ten. "I think you was telling the truth about those two pairs. However—beat three eights and take it."

"Three eights and a pair of queens," Bill announced, and showed them. "I raised you on queens up, just like I intimidated." He fixed a sad and speculative eye on Warland. "With six eights declared, this here deck we're playing with shorely needs investigation. Sometimes,"—he looked about to allow his words to embrace the other players, who were grinning in Warland's direction,—"*sometimes* I am constrained to believe that this company is not entirely honest."

"She was opened on a pair of kings, and I held up an ace for a kicker and got another," snapped Warland, facing his hand. "And of course you had to go out and get another eight."

"Another eight *eke*!" remarked Phil Ewing, across Warland's face to Bannister. "Thereby showing up our old friend Reese as a bluffin' ol' liar!"

"There's no harm in him, though, really," the Doctor assured the table. "He never really deceives people, you know. Like a child, he plays—like a child."

The big old Texan who was the victim of this badinage snorted, grinned and prepared to deal. Captain Bill, who had lost a number of pots to Warland during the evening and had been obliged to stand more than his share of jeering, was not content to let the matter drop so easily. He looked up from stacking his winnings and said earnestly:

"Don't get after him too hard, Doc. He's sensitive, Reese is, especially as to hard facts like that. I'm plumb surprised he's let you go as far as he has. There was a time, when he was able to handle a six-gun fast and accurate, that he wouldn't 'a' stood half as much as you've said. Reese used to be quite a shooter when he was young."

Bill chuckled delightedly as Warland stopped dealing to rise to the taunt:

"Whaddya mean, 'used to be'? I'll hang on a pistol with you right now, dark as it is, you ol' horned toad, and go out in a lot somewhere and see who can hit the most tossed-up tomato cans."

"Oh, me, I aint no good shot nowadays," Bill admitted. "I haven't shot a man since I was in the Ranger service, and that's more'n sixteen years. Lawdy, I bet I'd be slower'n cold molasses



"Then go after your gun." And shooter. . . . Bill shot him dead.

with a gun. At that, I'd take you up if it wasn't for delaying the game. You're too fat to shoot fast, Reese—you shorely are. When you went to get your pistol, you'd find your embomping interfering with you."

"Deal the cards; don't let him kid you," Joe Ansell advised Warland. "As a matter of fact, I don't suppose either you or I can handle a gun in these days any better than you can play cards."

This, as both Titus and Warland—and each of the other three for that matter—had a reputation for skill at draw poker that was not confined to their own town or county, wou appreciat smiles from the entire company, including the object of the moment's "hoorawing." It was after Warland had dealt, both he and Captain Bill dropping out of that pot, that Titus came back indirectly to the subject.

"Speaking of shooters," he remarked to Warland, "there's a *hombre* coming in to see me, up in San 'Ntonio, tomorrow evenin', that used to have some reputation with a gun. Not down here—I don't think he ever lived in Texas; up in Nevada it was."

"Ol'-timer, you say?"

"Not exactly. Later than our day, anyway. It was about the time of the Goldfield boom that he got a name for being so fast with a pistol, as I recollect it. You may have heard of his Name is Boyd Garrett—promoter. Gold, in those days. It was killing a couple of men in self-defense that got him his reputation. At least, he convinced the jury it was self-defense; the other fellows didn't draw quick enough. Now he's in oil, mostly."

"Seems to me I saw something about him in some advice from New York at the bank. I remember. Get-rich-quick man, is he?"

"Well, I reckon it's something like that, although as I



man's hand snapped to his six-
finger, through the right shoulder.

and it he's never really run up against the authorities. Too
ever, perhaps. He's sold a lot of oil-stock, one time and an-
other.

"Any oil back of it?"

Bill considered this judicially. "I wont go to say there wasn't,"
said, "but I didn't happen to hear of it. Just now he's floating
company called—"

Another hand being dealt, Phil Ewing interrupted to say: "Just
now we're playing a game called draw, and the hour is getting
late. If you don't look at your cards and cease acting like this
is a meeting of the Ladies' Aid Society, I don't see how I'm
going to get even before curfew rings."

Reese Warland, after the game stopped at midnight, and when
the cronies, who were playing in Warland's home in Summerton,
had put away their recriminations with the cards and chips and
were enjoying a few moments of conversation and tobacco, re-
turned to the subject of the erstwhile Nevada expert with firearms.

"What company was you starting to say this Garrett *hombre*
floating?" he asked.

"He calls it the Great Southwest Oil and Development Corpo-
ration."

"Covers considerable territory," Ansell put in. "Is the com-
pany as big as its name?"

"Not by four words at least," Bill grinned. "It has a lease on
one hundred acres outside the proven territory at Spiller, with a
contract that calls for one hole to be down at least twenty-five
hundred feet before the first day of month after next, or the lease
forfeited—and they're down four hundred feet in one hole, two
hundred in another and one hundred in a third."

"That kind of an outfit, eh?" Warland commented. "The more
the more stock-selling talk. And of course they can't get

any of those wells down to twenty-five hundred before the con-
tract expires."

"Natchully not. But the suckers that are buying the stock
don't know that."

"Seems to me you're keeping nice company," Phil Ewing re-
marked. "I've known you to consort with quite some bad men
in the last twenty-five years or so, but I never heard you'd got
to associating with sucker-stock salesmen."

"I aint associated with him yet," replied Bill. "But I'm going
to for a few minutes at least, tomorrow. If you ask me why
and wherefore, I don't know. His letter asking for the appoint-
ment and his telegram naming the time didn't say."

"He's probably going to get you to indorse his company—and
eke to sell you some stock," Doctor Bannister said.

Captain Bill being not only a cattleman on a large scale and a
director of the Traders' National Bank at San Antonio, but one
of the wealthiest and most successful oil-operators in Texas, this
quip called for no particular response on his part.

"It ought to be easy, if the way Bill plays poker is any crite-
rion," Warland opined. "Never satisfied to let well enough alone.
Has to go butting into most every pot, whether he's got any excuse
to or not. Never content to mind his own business and give the
honest players a chance."

"Oh, you needn't tell 'em; they all know you lost tonight, largely
because of my more scientific playing," Bill chuckled. "I don't
know what this Garrett man wants to see me for, but I'm betting
my answer is unsatisfactory. Me, I mostly 'tend to my own busi-
ness, and sucker oil-companies aint included."

"I wish he'd come to me with some of his schemes for stinging
the widows and orphans!" Warland exclaimed. "What I'd do to
him—"

"You'd do the same as I will, and that is prob'ly nothing," Cap-
tain Bill interrupted. "You and me may not sit into strange
games; but we don't figure it is necessarily our business to break 'em
up. If we'd set out to be guides, philosophers and friends for the
tenderfeet every time we've seen a crooked gambler getting ready
to shear a lamb, I'm figuring we wouldn't be as hale and hearty
as we are right now."

"Gambling—that's different. And tenderfeet aint widows and
orphans."

"I've seen some that were more helpless than any widow you
ever see, and I've run into quite a number of orphans that didn't
need any guardians. Anyway, I haven't any mission to reform the
world, nor do the things the Department of Justice and other fel-
lers like that get paid for. Us bankers are all the time warning
folks not to take stock in their get-rich-quick schemes that promise
two hundred-per-cent dividends—and all we get for it is a reputa-
tion for wanting the use of the money ourselves. Friends of mine
I'd go out of my way to warn, maybe. Strangers—I guess most
suckers are bawn thataway. If I stopped 'em being stung by one
con artist, they'd go out *pronto* and hunt for another."

"Doesn't he talk like a bad unvirtuous old man?" Doctor Bar-
nister marveled, as Warland saw them to the door. "Harsh and
hard-hearted ol' money-grubber—to hear him tell it."

Mr. Boyd Garrett, vice president and treasurer of Bolster,
Garrett & Company, Investment Brokers, Broad Street, New
York, seemed to come to the point of his errand with Captain
Titus in the first three minutes of their interview in Bill's office.
They exchanged brief amenities, and the visitor, a big, quick-mov-
ing man with cold, hard eyes and most excellent clothes, got down
to cases in businesslike fashion:

"What will you take for the Three Counties Oil Company, Mr.
Titus?"

Bill did not allow his face to show the surprise he felt. The
Three Counties was one of his best known and most profitable oil
properties. He answered promptly:

"A million dollars."

Garrett smiled deprecatingly. Based on location, production,
grade of oil and current prices, this figure was too high. He knew
it, and he knew Bill knew he knew it. Titus had merely named a
large figure for trading purposes.

"It might be worth six hundred thousand," the New Yorker
said.

"Or it might be worth two million, but it aint. However, that
price of one million goes until I know a little more about whom
you represent and what kind of terms you are offering. Are you
talking about a cash transaction? If so, perhaps you have some
bank letters or something of that sort."

Garrett did not seem to take offense at Bill's obvious inference
that he did not consider him in the class that can make unbacked
million-dollar offers. "Would you accept seven hundred and fifty

thousand in sixty or ninety days, something being paid down today as earnest money—say ten thousand?”

Bill considered this. “Until I know more about the deal, the price still stands at a million,” he said slowly. “The earnest money on that would natchully be more than ten thousand—twenty-five, at least.”

“You own all the Three Counties stock, don't you?”

“All but a few loose shares—fifty or so, that are held by the other officers and directors. I can deliver them.”

“Will you sell me an option on all the stock in the Three Counties Oil Company for ninety days for twenty-five thousand dollars, the option-money to apply on a purchase price of a million?”

“A million, eh?”

“A million. Your own price.”

A considerable light on what was in the other's mind came to Captain Titus.

“Just who is making this offer? Whom would I be selling the option to?”

Garrett shrugged. “What difference does that make, so long as I hand you a certified check for the twenty-five thousand the minute your lawyers get the papers drawn and mine pass on them? However, there is no secret about it. The option would be to the Great Southwest Oil and Development Corporation.”

“And this certified check you mention would be signed by you as—Are you the treasurer?”

“I don't see why you should worry about that, so long as it is certified. However, it would be either my own personal check, or the check of my firm—Bolster, Garrett & Company.”

“Who is Bolster?” Captain Titus asked. “And who is the ‘Company’?”

“Why?”

Bill's voice was mild. “I'd natchully want to look up their rating, on a deal as big as this.”

“A certified check—”

“For the option, yes. But are your names good for the million?” He smiled disarmingly. “I'm not intimating they aint, of course, but it is good business to look into such things.”

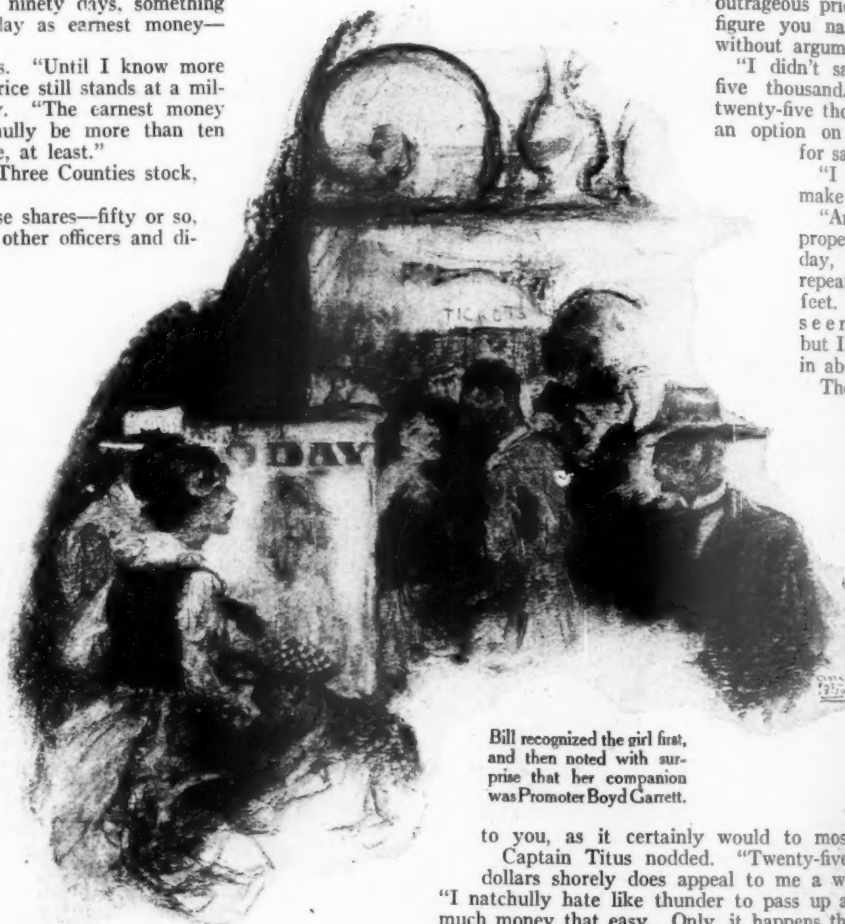
Garrett looked squarely into Bill's eyes and said with a note of significance: “What do you care whether we're good for a million dollars or not? The certified check will speak for itself, wont it? And if anything should happen that we couldn't take up the option—” He spread his hands, leaving the sentence unfinished.

“That is to say,” Bill responded evenly, “you don't especially want the Three Counties Company and don't expect to buy it, but you are willing to pay twenty-five thousand dollars for the privilege of saying truthfully that you have an option.”

The promoter evidently did not think it worth while to deny this. “That is our business,” he said, not offensively. “However, for the sake of argument, we'll admit that possibly we shouldn't take up the option. If so, you would have made twenty-five thousand pretty easily.”

“That's so,” Titus agreed pleasantly. “That's so. So I would: . . . No.”

“What do you mean? I have accepted your price, and it's an



Bill recognized the girl first, and then noted with surprise that her companion was Promoter Boyd Garrett.

to you, as it certainly would to most any man.”

Captain Titus nodded. “Twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars shorely does appeal to me a whole lot,” he agreed. “I natchully hate like thunder to pass up a chance to make much money that easy. Only, it happens that some other fellow appeal to me more—my business standing, for instance.”

Garrett's eyes narrowed. “I hope that isn't meant offensively.” “Not necessarily,” Bill told him. “It is only a statement of fact. You see, I've got a little reputation, such as it is; down here in Texas, and in one place and another, and if I was to sell you an option and you was to go around telling your customers about it—you natchully would be telling your customers, I take it, maybe they'd be looking me up and hearing that I was a reliable old feller, and they'd say: ‘If this here Titus is making in it, the deal is prob'ly all right.’ And then if anything should happen—”

“Such as what?” Garrett demanded.

“I don't know, suh, except what you said about merely buying up the title for ninety days. I don't happen to be able to figure out exactly how it could be worth thirty thousand dollars to me legitimately just to be able to say for three months that I owned an option on a first-class producing oil-company, that I had good standing at the banks and so forth; but that as you marked a few minutes ago, sir, is your affair. Besides, I don't admit there's lots of things about how business is done that I don't know. Haven't got time to learn 'em, either, at my present rate. He looked at his watch ostentatiously.

Garrett was angry and tried to conceal it, but he couldn't resist an attempt at sarcasm. “I was told I would find you to be a pretty up-to-date business man,” he said. “I seem to have been misinformed.”

“Yes suh,” Bill replied simply. “I guess you was. There's a lot of up-to-date ways of getting money that I don't know as much about as some folks. Being old-fashioned, thataway, prob'ly makes me a right smart of money, one time and another.”

“At any rate, I presume I can depend on you to consider what we have discussed as confidential.”

“I don't remember that there was anything said about it being in confidence,” Bill reminded him. “However, I'm not in the habit of butting into other people's business; and I assume, suh, I have affairs enough of my own not to go out of my way to worry about things that don't concern me.” (Continued on page 47)

outrageous price, and accepted the figure you named for an option without argument—”

“I didn't say I'd take twenty-five thousand. I said at least twenty-five thousand. As for the option on that property, it's for sale today.”

“I might be able to make it thirty.”

“An option on the property aint for sale today, Mr. Garrett,” he repeated, and came to his feet. “I don't want to seem discourteous, but I have an engagement in about ten minutes.”

The New Yorker

rose. He registered conflicting emotions. “I have been given to understand you were a pretty shrewd business man,” he said. “I had thought the chance to make twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars for me by buying up the title to your company ninety days would

Old and New

By ALFRED NOYES

THE great new morning fills the sky
Because the old sun walks on high,
And the old miracle of the dew
Christens the rose that Eden knew.

NEW every morning, yea, for me
New, light and day, is the old gray sea,
New every note that the thrush can sing
And new the shape of the swallow's wing.

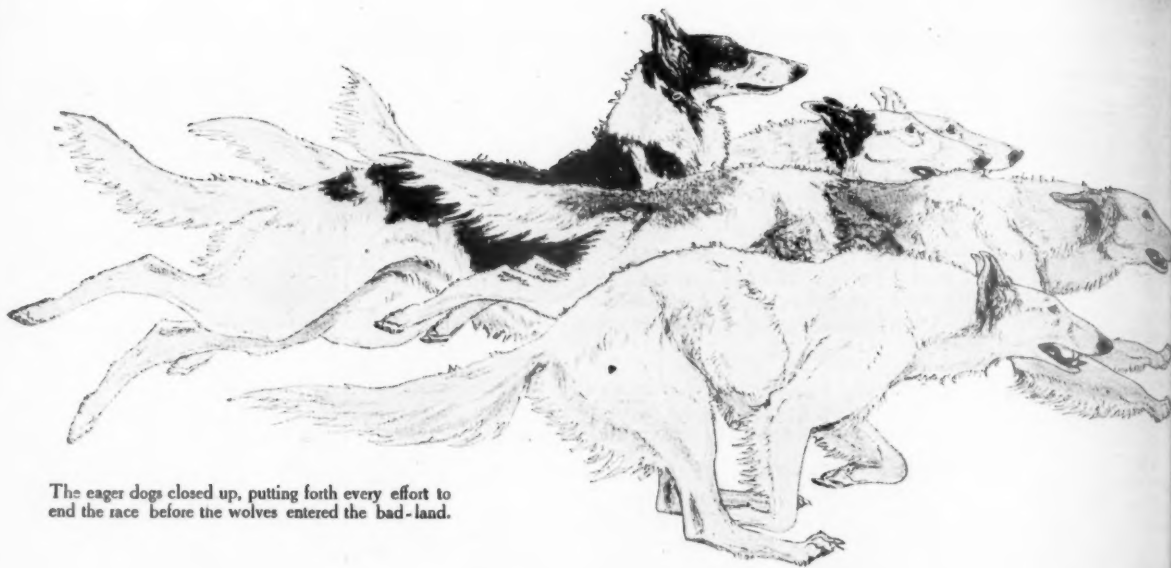
ONLY the ill dream drifts apart
Out of the universal heart.
Only chaos and death withdraw
Out of the universal law.

"HEAVEN and earth shall pass away,"
I heard the youngest rebel say.
The very next day he was buying a ring
And writing an ode to the great new spring.

EVER the constant clock of the flower
Marks the time and tells the hour.
Ever the oldest tale on earth
Brings the youngest dream to birth.

SO lift up your heart when the wrong and the lie
Go their ways to the dark and die;
But down on your knees, in the dawn, and pray,
That the ageless word may be yours today.





The eager dogs closed up, putting forth every effort to end the race before the wolves entered the bad-land.

THE YELLOW HORDE

By HAL G. EVARTS

Illustrated by CHARLES LIVINGSTON BULL

The story so far: The wolf-hunter Collins heard the coyotes howling. "The little devils!" he chuckled. "Men can't wipe 'em out. There'll be a million coyotes left to howl when the last man dies!"

And then it was that Collins caught a new howl—that of a breed-wolf, a cross between coyote and wolf, possessing the cunning of the coyote and the strength of the wolf.

The coming of Breed brought changes in the wild; for the coyotes learned to run with him and thus to hunt in a pack. Collins swore to get Breed, but trap and bullet and poison-bait failed. Perhaps more dangerous for Breed was his friendship with Collins' half-wild pet Shady, a cross between coyote and dog.

COLLINS had waited till the fur was prime and the flesh side of a coyote pelt showed flint-white, before throwing out his trap-line. He made the first set three hundred yards from the cabin, choosing the spot with care, for he knew that the last place a coyote would enter was the one where guiding clumps of sage formed an inviting lane across the traps. He selected an open spot instead, and dismounted on a sheep pelt spread flat upon the ground; and with a hand-ax he hewed out a triangular trap-bed a foot across by three inches deep, placing every shred of fresh earth removed from it in a canvas sack. Then he fitted a heavy Newhouse trap in place with both springs bent far to the rear, and drove a slender steel pin out of sight through the swivel-ring of the chain. He smoothed a piece of canvas under the jaws and over the pan, and poured the soft earth over it all, filling it level with the surface and tamping it firmly with his fingers except within the six-inch circle of the jaws.

From a second sack Collins sifted dust over the spot till it matched the surrounding soil; then he remounted and leaned from the saddle to recover the sheep pelt on which he had knelt, and used it as a fan to whip the dust into curling eddies which settled back so uniformly as to defy the eyes of any man to detect the location of the trap. The surplus earth removed from the hole he carried away, to be emptied far from the spot. For Collins knew the qualities of his prey, and a good wolfer leaves no sign. He had used no foolish scent to disguise his own, knowing that the heat of day and the frost of night would diffuse his scent and obliterate all trace of it, just as an animal's trail grows cold in time, though any foreign odor lingering longer than his own would only serve as a guide for the cunning prey he sought.

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The wisdom of the fox has furnished theme for song and legend, and only those who have followed the trap-line for both fox and coyote know that Reynard's vaunted brain is but a dry sponge when compared to the knowledge-soaked head of the prairie wolf. It is the way of the coyote to live near man, confident that his own cunning will offset that of his arch enemy and lead him to scatter through all the contrivances men may employ for his destruction. Collins knew that the fox was only trap-shy, but the coyote was trap-wise—that he would go to a bait, knowing the traps were there, and risk his life in an effort to uncover them, and so leave evidence that he was keener than his foe.

At the end of a week Collins had thrown out three pear-shaped loops of traps, each line with a length of twenty miles, the whole in a clover-leaf pattern, with his cabin as the base. He had no bait until his scent should have been blotted out round the traps, not from fear that coyotes would not approach the traps while his scent was fresh, but from certain knowledge that they would approach too soon, locate his traps and uncover them. When the third trap-circle was complete, he started back over the first and baited the sets; then began the steady routine of resetting one string each day, covering his entire line in three days.

Shady frequently accompanied Collins on these trips, and when he made a trap-set, she sat down some distance away and watched him with full understanding of what he was about, for Shady's past experience with traps had been large. She had seen Collins take many a coyote from his traps. Twice she had slipped away to steal the bait from some set near the cabin, and both times she felt the sudden deadly clutch of steel jaws on her foot, remaining in their grip till Collins had released her. She had seen coyotes

dead and bloated from eating poison-baits—and meat was now a danger-signal to Shady, not a lure. She would touch no food except that which she obtained at the cabin.

The trap-line had yielded many coyote pelts while Breed was still in the hills, and he knew nothing of the wide-spread mortality among the coyotes in his absence or the dangers which lurked in wait for him on his return. There were two hundred sheep scattered for miles through the hills, and Breed and the coyote pack had found easy killing. Winter had claimed the lofty peaks, though but little snow had fallen below timber-line.

Breed sensed the coming storm. The movements of the elk-herds told him it would be a heavy one. It was nearing the end of the elk's rutting-moon, but the bulls were still bugling. Breed heard the clear note of an old herd bull, the piercing sound reaching him from many miles back among the snowy peaks. It was closely followed by others. The elk migration had begun; the herds were evacuating the lofty basins of their summer range and boiling out through the high passes of the peaks before the snow-fall of the coming storm should block them in—coming down to winter in the lower valleys of the hills.

The certainty with which animals gauge a coming storm is cited as proof of that mysterious instinct with which men credit them; yet this information may reach them through known laws. Breed knew of it from the elk movements, and it is probable that the elk in turn were warned from some similarly natural source—perhaps from atmospheric changes, more probably from the flight of migratory birds.

A marshland may be empty of certain species of ducks in the fall; then suddenly a flock will pitch down out of the blue, followed by another and another till the whole sky is streaked with the oncoming horde. They will feed and start on, the belated arrivals not even alighting, but holding straight ahead; the flight ceases as suddenly as it began. Invariably a storm drives down out of the north in the wake of the flocks. But their conduct is not a matter of instinct. The storm strikes those birds that have remained farthest north, and as they scurry ahead of it, the more southerly ones take wing. Many ducks fly well over a hundred miles an hour and so can distance the swiftest storms. Even the ears of man may detect the difference between the wing-whistles of a flock of mallards or other slow-flying ducks and the humming screech of redhead or canvas-back hurtling through the night with tremendous speed; and animals note such things more readily than man.

In any event, Breed knew of the coming storm many hours before the first soft flakes fell and melted on his yellow coat. He took shelter under the low-hanging branches of a stunted spruce and slept. It snowed for two days, and throughout that time there was little sound in the hills. Each coyote in the pack had sought out a similar shelter, the mated pairs bedding together, the others singly. No one of them howled during the storm. The elk and deer held to their beds without a sound. The few stragglers who had not yet crossed out through the passes were the only ones that moved, pushing on through the storm; and the herd bulls traveling with them bugled to hold their cows together, but the snow-filled air deadened these distant sounds. And for two days Breed heard nothing but the soft hissing of the snow through the branches or the groaning of over-burdened trees. The third night a big gray owl hooted gruffly an hour before dawn; and as if dispersed by the sound of his voice, the last gray clouds scudded past, and the stars flamed from the steel-blue sky of night.

A savage wind sprang up with the sun, shrieking along the exposed ridges and rippling the valleys of lodgepole pine, hurling its force against the spruce slopes. For another day Breed heard only the howl of the gale, the snow sliding from the swaying branches and the sudden crash of falling trees—not a sound of life. The fury of the wind abated toward night, and an hour after dark there was a sudden lull, followed by one last rush of wind, leaving the white hills wrapped in a vast silence.

Breed heard a single bugle note of a young bull elk, the last he was to hear for another ten months, for the mating time of the antlered tribes had been ushered out with the storm. The gray owls hooted the warning that

they would soon set forth on silent-wings to strike down any small creature that moved across the white carpet under the trees. The elk were working back up to the bald ridges that had been blown free of snow. All the night-feeders of the wild prowled in search of food after the fast.

Breed raised the hunting cry, and the coyote pack answered roll-call. They were gaunt from the three-day famine. They ran silently and with but a single purpose, spurred on by hunger. A coyote far out on one flank of the pack winded a bunch of elk and headed for them. The elk accorded him scarcely a glance as he drew near. In an earlier day, before the white men had invaded



The big cat made no move. The first pain had dulled, and he rested quietly.

the foot-hills, the elk herds had wintered there, but the coyotes had not molested them; of late a few coyotes had invaded the high country, the summer range, but the elk did not fear them.

The coyote howled, one short, eager blast, and angled in between the herd and a straggler on the edge of it, a yearling elk, a spike bull, his first antler growth—two pointed spikes eighteen inches long. He was not alarmed—but it was a new kind of coyote that faced him now, one that had learned pack hunting under the leadership of the yellow wolf.

The coyote made a swift lunge, and drove his teeth into one hind leg. The young bull whirled and aimed a sweeping slash of his polished spears, intent upon impaling his foe: but as he turned, a second coyote flashed from behind a tree and slashed him. The bull whirled again and struck wickedly with a smashing forefoot. The rest of the elk had stopped to gaze in amazement at this strange scene—at coyotes attacking an elk.

Every coyote in the pack had altered his course at that short howl, wheeling as at a command. Yellow shapes had appeared as it by magic and were sliding under the trees on silent feet and circling the bull. There was something sinister and purposeful in this concerted action, and the rest of the elk milled about uneasily and at last turned and trotted off. The spike bull fought with hoof and horn, but at every turn a coyote slashed him from behind, striking always at the hamstring. His rage turned to fear, and he fled.

The yearling struck the heavy four-foot drifts where the wind had scoured the snow from the ridge above and sifted it deep in the timber. His sharp hoofs and heavier weight let him down into the snow while the coyotes padded easily along, their feet sinking in but a few inches. He tired himself with desperate charges at some coyote that always eluded him, while others drove fangs in him from behind. More coyotes joined the running fight, and he was far gone before Breed drove through the pack and struck him with all the force of a killing wolf. The elk spent the last of his ebbing strength in a whirlwind of furious fighting, then went down, and the yellow horde swarmed over him. They fed long, and when they left the feast, they were no longer gaunt. Flanks had filled out, and paunches sagged heavily, nearly touching the snow. The following night they returned to the kill and finished it. Then Breed headed back for the open sage-brush foot-hills. The immediate fear of being shot had departed, leaving only the lesson as a reminder of his narrow escape.

The pack reached the edge of the hills in the first morning light, and many of them kept on, but Breed, more averse to daylight traveling than they, would not venture down till night. The low country lay spread out before him, ragged patches of brown alternating with those of dirty white, for the wind had scoured the snow from open grass country and piled it to the tops of the sage in the heavier clumps, and in long drifts trailing away down-wind behind them, or packed it in the depths of bad-land washes and cracks. The powdery snow had been swept from the open before it had time to melt, and the dry air of the hill country had sucked up what little moisture remained, leaving the flats almost as dusty as before.



With nightfall Breed descended to the tongue of the foothills that reached up into the notch formed by the outcropping spurs where it joined the main range at right angles. Thirty miles along this Hardpan Spur was his home territory, and he followed along the base of it. Not till within ten miles of Collins' cabin did he howl. The wolver heard it; and again he had the feeling that he could almost name that peculiarity in Breed's note; but before he could give it expression, the solution was slipping away from him as always before. He could feel the odd quality, but it defied analysis in words.

Shady had also heard the call and answered it. Breed started toward her, but stopped abruptly and tested the wind. The scent of stale meat played on his nostrils, and he veered aside to investigate. He moved along a cow-trail and peered from the edge of the sage at a ten-pound chunk of meat that lay in the center of an open flat. He knew what that meant. Suspicion flooded him, and every hair tingled as he realized that this was the work of man. Traps! No coyote on the range would have found need to look twice at the tempting morsel to know that it had not come there by accident, but had been placed by some man as a coyote lure.

Breed, springing as he did from two wise tribes, had been educated in two schools. His coyote mother had led him to men, knowing men had put it there to bait her, and she had taught him to detect the most cunningly buried trap. Later he had practiced this art himself. The old dog-wolf who was his father had followed one simple rule which served him well. He killed each meal as he felt the need of it, and would touch no other food, not even returning to previous kills of his own. Breed was possessed of both traits in moderation, inclining to either for long periods, as his moods varied. Breed moved to within ten feet of the meat and extended one forepaw, feeling cautiously through the carpet of dust, then pushed it two inches ahead.

For a solid hour that paw was not once lifted from the ground except when the other was pushed forward to replace it. He moved ahead an inch at a time, the edging forepaws feeling through the dust for the least sign of loosened earth beneath. He knew that the crushing jaws of a trap yawned beneath the surface somewhere near the meat. His eyes swept every inch of ground for a sign that differed from the rest, and his nose quested for a spot which held the taint of man. A faint trace of it pervaded the place, coming mainly from the bait itself and almost blotted by the meat-scent.

Cripp and Peg watched every move from a distance of ten feet. Two young coyotes had come to the spot and one of them worked in toward the bait from the opposite side, using the same tactics as those employed by Breed. At the end of an hour Breed stood within three feet of his goal, and the outstretched paw suddenly touched yielding earth. He scratched gently along the edge of the softened spot; a claw scraped some solid substance and the moonlight glinted on a point of naked steel. Breed pushed his paw



The huge dog-wolf halted. Shady flinched away from him, and Breed's lips writhed away from his ivory fangs.

By Hal G. Evarts

beneath it and gently lifted till half of a deadly four-pound trap showed above the dust. He looked long at it, then veered past it to the bait; and the young coyote edged in from the other side.

Breed's feet did not shift an inch as he tore a mouthful from the meat, but the young coyote across from him strained to drag the whole of it from the spot. It was wired solidly to a stake and he shifted far to either side in his vain efforts to dislodge it. There was a hissing grate of loosened springs, and the young coyote felt the bone-shattering snap of a trap as it closed on his foot. Breed whirled and leaped ten feet away, from which point he watched the struggles of his ill-fated friend. In his desperate struggles to free himself the young coyote leaped clear across the meat and the trap that Breed had unearthed closed on another foot. Breed circled uneasily round the spot, powerless to help the coyote stretched full length between two traps; yet he lingered till an hour before dawn.

This experience quickened old fears in Breed. Memories of past horrors, long dormant but not forgotten, welled up out of his mind to increase his caution, and fresh pangs were added by similar discoveries on each succeeding night. The whole range seemed studded with fearsome traps, and the odor of stale meat was borne on every breeze. There were few nights when he did not find some animal fast in one of these man-made snares. Each new victim acted differently, according to the characteristics of its kind. Breed found a badger in a trap, and the animal ceased his struggle long enough to wrinkle his nose and hiss at Breed with a thick, snakelike sound. The badger's forepaws were more than twice the size of his hind feet, and were fitted with heavy two-inch claws, while those of the hind feet measured but half an inch. He was caught by one hind foot, leaving the powerful spading-forks of the forepaws free to work. He had always found safety by burrowing in the ground; and so now, in his last extremity, he turned to digging and plowed every inch of surface within reach. He settled on one spot at last and burrowed from sight. Breed watched the heaving dirt till it ceased to move as the badger settled comfortably in fancied security, buried to the full limit of the trap chain.

Some nights later Breed passed a cross fox that had stepped into one of Collins' traps. The fox was never still, weaving in and out, looping and turning round the pin that held the trap, lashed into constant movement by his native nervousness, but making no strenuous efforts to break loose. Later the same night Breed found a bobcat. The big cat made no move save a slight creasing of his facial muscles preparatory to a snarl if the wolf drew near. The first pain had dulled, and he rested quietly,



The elk migration had begun; the herds were evacuating their summer range.

lacking the hardihood to stretch his own flesh and bones in a struggle against the trap.

But Breed always found a trapped coyote fighting—fighting silently and gamely to the last heart-beat. Coyotes are high in the scale of intelligence, and so each one has an individuality of his own. One would surge time after time against the chain, driving savagely to the end of it. Another would grind his teeth against the cold steel till his jaws dripped blood; a third would amputate the mangled foot. But whatever the method, the basic fact was the same—no coyote waited submissively for his fate, but waged a ceaseless, desperate fight for freedom.

All these things heightened Breed's suspicions. He felt the re-assertion of wolfish caution within him, driving out the coyote desire to outwit man. Three times he unearthed the traps and stole the bait. Then he refused to go near stale meat. He was nauseated by the smell of it and merely avoided instead of investi-

CHAPTER IV

gating the spots from which the scent came to him. And this was not through fear of traps,—he retained full confidence in his ability to detect them,—but from the fact that wherever he had found traps in the past, he had also found poison, and so these two were associated together in his mind.

Throughout a whole month of accustoming himself to these new conditions Breed had visited Shady but twice. He had the companionship of coyotes to fill his time, and the lonesome howls of the she-wolf were unanswered. It is the stock-dog without steady occupation that reverts to the wild. Mere inactivity, even if coupled with kindness, is insufficient to still his natural restlessness and fill his life; he must have careful training and active employment to be content—and Shady was half wild.

THE mating time of wolves was drawing near, and Breed caught the new note in Shady's voice. He dropped all other business to hurry to her. Though the season was yet some time ahead, they knew its nearness, and each recognized in the other a possible future mate.

That insistent note in her voice was more pronounced as the season neared, and Breed tingled to the sound of it. The frequency of his visits increased till they were of nightly occurrence instead of semi-monthly. He used every wolfish inducement to lure her away from the vicinity of the twinkling lights that marked the abode of man. She longed to follow him into the wild, but could not bring herself to face its terrors. Breed longed to follow her when she left him, but could not bring himself to face the horrors which must lurk near the haunts of men. These clashing outlooks upon life held them apart.

The season had started, and some few coyotes had paired; yet Breed could not induce Shady to follow him. The preceding winter her desire for motherhood had been thwarted. Collins had chained her to the cabin for a month. Coyotes are without the wolf suspicion which fills their larger cousins with fear of human habitations, and they are prone to investigate them at night. Several dog coyotes had braved the dangers of Collins' cabin in answer to Shady's howls. Her soft whimpering had roused the wolfer each time this occurred, and every new admirer had been greeted with a charge of buckshot as he slipped toward the house—three dog coyotes had paid for their temerity with their lives, others had had narrow escapes.

The Coyote Prophet intended the same imprisonment for Shady the present season, but he neglected it one day too long. He came from the cabin, a collar and chain in his hand, only to see Shady slip away into the dusk. A minute later she howled.

Breed heard it. Every fiber of him quivered to the sound. It was the mating call!

Collins whistled in vain; there was no answering whimper from Shady. But the habit of obedience was strong in her, and she lingered within the sound of his whistle. Breed came nearer than ever before, his fears dulled by the message she had sent him. Collins came from the house again and whistled shrilly. Breed shrank from the sound and drew back as Shady trotted a short distance toward the house; she answered the whistle with an uneasy whine, and Collins moved in the direction from which it came, coaxing in low tones as he advanced.

Fear flooded Breed. It spurred him to sudden rushes of flight which were halted in a few stiff bounds as the longing for Shady cried out against his leaving her. He stood still, less than a dozen feet away, his ears alert straining for further sounds from the vicinity of the cabin. Then came the clanking of the chain in Collins' hand. It was the clank of a trap-chain to Breed—and he was off. That same sound, its meaning so different for each of them, resulted in flight for both. Shady ran with him through the night; and once started, it was not so hard to keep on. And as she ran, she transferred her trust from Collins to Breed, giving herself entirely into his keeping to lead her through the unknown perils which lay ahead; and she ran close to him, her nose almost touching his flank.

THE exhilarating element of danger in trap-robbing, which appeals so strongly to the coyote, held no fascination for Shady. She was vastly trap-wise but used her knowledge solely for self-preservation. Every scrap of meat on the range represented possible pain or death to her, and she found no space in close investigation with its attendant risks. She was entirely dependent upon Breed, feeling a sense of security in his nearness but weighed down by the vast unknown which seemed to close upon her whenever the gap between them exceeded the span of one leap. She would not touch any food other than that which he provided.

The coyotes clustered round the steer that Breed pulled down a few hours after luring Shady from the cabin, and she viewed them suspiciously, warning them off by repeated growls. Peg and Cripp edged in to feed. Shady's protest rose frenziedly; she rushed at them but did not attack, and the two old coyotes eyed her warily as they ate. She noted that Breed accepted their presence, and she quieted and patterned her actions according to her mate's.

The rest of the pack came in. Her uneasiness persisted, but for an hour she ate but little, edging away from physical contact with those who crowded about her. She pressed close to Breed's side and whirled to snap at any coyote who attempted to wedge between them, but her suspicions subsided as she found that these nips were never returned. Whenever a dog coyote was inclined to make friendly advances to Shady a low growl from Breed warned him from her side.

The feast was but half finished when the head of every coyote in the pack was raised at once; and the shuffling feet and grinding jaws were stilled as a timber wolf howled from the slope of the Hardpan Spur. All animal sounds were suspended till the last ripples of Breed's answering cry died away; then lesser sounds, having preserved strict silence while two mighty hunters spoke, resumed their own interrupted communications.

The Coyote Prophet heard the two cries, and that baffling quality in Breed's voice was instantly clear to him, as was the reason why he had never before been able to give it name. He had

quested for the difference with his ear—and the difference lay in the feel of the sound. Collins had felt a crawling of his flesh and a roughening of his skin at the gray wolf's cry; for though a man may learn that note every night of his life, the wolf-shiver will shake his frame till the last time it sounds as surely as it does the first. It is not fear; no man can name it; but the wolf-shiver is as inseparably linked with the wolf-howl as the involuntary gasp is linked with a dash of ice water on the spine. And Collins knew that that quality was lacking in Breed's cry. The personality of the gray wolf was marked by absolute superiority, his bleak outlook on life undiluted by a single ray of that human which is so evident in every act of the dog and the prairie wolf; and this difference of temperament was reflected in his voice, apparent to the ears of the animal world, apparent to Collins only in the different way

in which his subconscious mind reacted to his howl. "You, Breed! I've got your number now," he said. "I could pick you out from among a hundred wolves." In making this casual assertion the Coyote Prophet had no thought that the day might come when he would be able to file it among prophecies fulfilled.

It was the first time that Shady had heard the cry of one of the big gray hunters. She noted the tension among her new friends, without reading its portent. Of them all, Breed seemed the only one unaffected. One by one the coyotes left the feast; then the remaining few sidled hurriedly away as a huge dog moved swiftly across the flat. His pace slowed as he neared the kill, and he halted ten feet away, his quivering nose taking stock of the two who fed there.

Shady's long run through the sage had whipped her soft fur into of sage dust, its sharp scent nearly obliterated. (Continued on page 53)

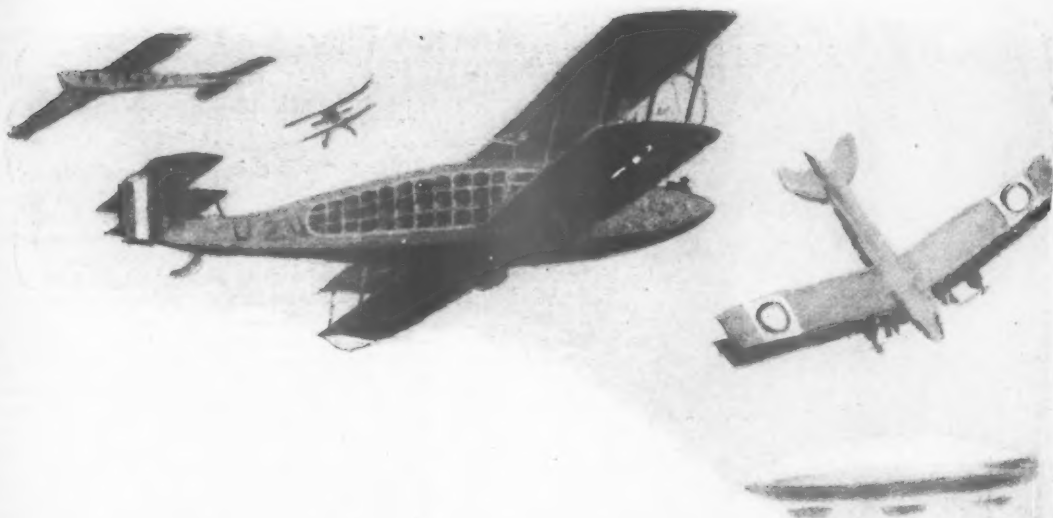
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In the next, the October,
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THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE



COMMERCIAL navigation of the air has already reached a high state of development abroad. Here then is a story of what may sooner or later be read as news in foreign dispatches.

UP IN THE AIR

By

F. BRITTEN AUSTIN

Illustrated by

J. E. ALLEN

ONE by one the machines ran forward from the long line of hangars where the stocking-cap wind-indicators ballooned stiffly horizontal from their staffs. One by one they scudded across the rank turf of the great airdrome; and by one, repeating each other's movement like rooks rising from a field, they swung round into the wind, hurled themselves against it and were borne upward in long, slow spirals until, their height attained, they sped onward, in rapid diminution of size, upon their diverse courses. It was the busy departure-hour of the morning at the London terminals, used by all the half-dozen competing aerial-transportation companies, whether their machines were bound merely for Paris, Brussels or Amsterdam, or upon the long-distance schedules to Madrid and Barcelona, Marseilles, Milan and Rome, Munich, Vienna or Berlin. The somewhat harassed ground-superintendent of the International Airways, Limited, gave a perfunctory farewell to the Madrid-bound machine—which raced, prodigiously bearing, a miniature hurricane in retrograde escape from her, away over the field—and hastened with quick, self-important little steps to where the Amsterdam “bus” lay poised and peaceful in readiness for her flight. The overalled mechanics had ceased their pertinacious irritation of her engines. The last control-wire to aileron and rudder had been tested. Her great wings, fallaciously heavy in the thickness of their appearance, spread themselves wide, contemptuously immobile, it seemed, in the gusts of that fresh wind upon which in a few minutes she would soar. The pilot, helmeted and leather-coated, stood at a little distance from her, finishing his last cigarette for several hours and contemplating with a mild interest the passengers who, having been checked off by an official, climbed one by one the ladder into the interior of the airplane. The superintendent bustled up to him and was greeted with a casual nod obviously altogether inadequate to his dignity. “You’ve got an important passenger today, Elliott,” he said with a happiness of tone that was intended to recall a recognition of his importance,—“so be careful!” “I’ve also got a neck,” replied the pilot, unimpressed, “and I wouldn’t



The pilot stood finishing his last cigarette and contemplating the passengers.

hurt it for worlds. It reminds me of carefulness at every minute."

"Yes, I dare say," said the superintendent in a manner sufficiently indicative of his indifference to its continued vertebation, "but this is serious. I warn you, officially, Elliott, that you are to exercise special care on this flight."

The young man looked at him with innocent eyes.

"What's the excitement? I'll have to have a look at his precious nibs."

"You'll have nearly half a million pounds', sterling, worth of diamonds on board—that's the excitement," replied the superintendent, crushingly. "It's the biggest parcel of precious stones ever carried by air, and its safe arrival will be a stunt advertisement for this company—you understand? You've got to get it there!"

The pilot shrugged his shoulders.

"I'll get it there if I get there myself—and I have no particular desire to remain halfway, I can assure you. They can't be stolen, once we leave the ground—and my responsibility doesn't begin till then."

The superintendent nodded his head in agreement.

"No, they can't be stolen on the way, Elliott—and that's the reason we are carrying them. These international diamond-thieves have been getting so busy of late that the owners are scared of train and steamer transit. Once you're up in the air, they're safe till you come down again, that's a sure thing—and we've staked our reputation that you won't come down until you get to Amsterdam. The company is relying on you," he finished grandiloquently.

"Righto!" said the pilot. "I'll do my best. Where are the stones? In the luggage-hold?"

"No. The owners are sending a man with them." He looked around him. "Ah, there he goes! I must just speak to him!" He turned to hurry after a man carrying a small suitcase additionally attached to him by a steel chain that glinted in the sun. Two other men accompanied him, one on each side, evidently as a protective escort. The superintendent paused for a final warning word back to the pilot, before he caught them up: "Don't forget, Elliott—we rely on you!"

The pilot smiled in quiet self-confidence, glanced at the weather-sky and then at his wrist-watch, threw away the stub of his cigarette and walked to where his mechanic stood awaiting him at the foot of the ladder under the open trapdoor forward of the wings.

"All serene, Thompson?" he asked casually.

"All serene, sir," replied the mechanic. "She's tuned up fine this morning. We'll have a good trip."

"Sure," said the pilot as he clambered up the ladder into the cramped cockpit, faced with dials, compasses and gauges, and slid into his seat. The mechanic followed him, shut down the trapdoor, and slid likewise into the left-side seat. The pilot tested his controls, started first one engine, then the other, kept them running gently, looked over the side of the cockpit in readiness for the signal to start.

The door was closed upon the passengers in the saloon of the airplane, and they glanced, curiously or diffidently according to their natures, at each other in the moment of suspension while they were still stationary. There were ten of them, five on one side and five on the other, with a narrow gangway between them, each in his wicker chair at a window of the saloon. Their expressions varied considerably. Those who had made air journeys before leaned back in their chairs and spread their legs with a great assumption of experienced confidence. Those who first trip it was shifted uneasily and smiled rather sheepishly from faces that were rather white. The man with the suitcase carried it poised upon his knees, his fingers tight upon the handle, and looked stonily in front of him—as though, in preoccupation of his great responsibility, he was oblivious of his fellow-passengers. The couple of men in front of him, who occupied the forward seat on each side, joked amiably with each other. Some of the other passengers frowned, feeling this levity timed in the solemn silence which filled what was perhaps the last minute of safe contact with the earth.

Despite their protracted anticipation, the moment of departure was unexpected when it arrived. A startling blast of violent, swallowing noise from engines suddenly accelerated smote the hearts of the nervous passengers with a pang of sharply enhanced apprehension. The roar of the whirring propellers, of the exhausts from feverishly working cylinders, swelled and burred as in opening circles of excessive sound, gathering force and volume from instant to instant—maintained itself for a moment or two at a level pitch of intensity that seemed to devastate the senses—leaped yet again to an incredible vehemence. There was a slight bump. They were moving. Ten pairs of eyes looked out of the windows, saw the green field flitting past them, its grass reassuringly close, its inequalities felt in a series of muffled shocks but overrun too quickly for vision. Then the trees beyond the airdrome gyrated swiftly backwards. They were turning. The speed slackened. One of the engines muted itself suddenly, leaped again with equal suddenness to its full deep-toned roar. Was one last spasm of violently intensified sound, of energy at a maximum effort, they felt themselves rush over the field at vertiginous speed, bumped twice, thrice—bumped no more. The field which they stared dropped away from them; the line of humps sank into safe depression below them as they neared it with apparent recklessness; the trees beyond the airdrome were suddenly close small objects foreshortened on a widened-landscape—passengers gripped at their chairs as they nosed down and rose again gently in a drop and lift upon the slopes of invisible quiet waves, heeled to one side and steadied once more, always turning above a diminished world with which they had lost contact.

Cut off from their fellows by the now evenly maintained silence which beat stunningly upon their ears to the obvious exclusion of conversation, the travelers stared out of their windows, lost themselves in the interest of contemplating an unfamiliar world too toylike ever to have been their real habitation. To the patchwork of fields in the vicinity of the airdrome, absurdly and unworkably small in their cramped quadrilaterals of confining landscape succeeded suburbs with masses of toy houses neatly blocked off in squares and crescents and triangles by clearly defined roads in which diminutive traffic actually moved. Churches, in all their variations of real architecture, lifted midget steeples far below them. Complete railway-systems, with a multiplicity of sidings, equipped to the last detail with signals and bridges and railway stations, with moving model trains emitting real steam in exact imitation of the real thing, lay flat for their superior vision. They lost the sense of their own speed in the uniform, drowsing monotony of the engines which drove them onward. All this silent world seemed to drift slowly beneath them, diminishing imperceptibly as they rose to yet higher levels.

London spread itself beneath them, bisected by the sinuous snake of the Thames broadening to its head in the haze far in front, itself veiled by patches of smoke here and there, charted out in a surprising neatness between its main streets, reduced to a scale which permitted recognition of its most salient features lost behind them almost as they

perceived. They left the broad curves of the river to their right, it seemed—so complete was the absence of all shock or friction in this comfortable saloon,—over suburbs that thinned into fields, over fields that succeeded fields in an infinite variation of greens and browns, over small towns clearly islanded in agricultural country, over woods too tiny to seem worth conserving, over long, empty roads thinly ribboned between the patchwork countryside on which occasional motorcars crawled like insects. Their speed was only vivid to them when they noticed yet again the birdlike shadow flitting far below over plowed land and pasture and realized that it was their own.

The time passed unremarked in the all-drowning roar of the engines, so monotonously maintained that it seemed like an enveloping silence which, here aloft, walled them off from the normal assurance of terrestrial things; and still the passengers sat absorbed and solitary in their downward contemplation. On a level keel, any variations in height so gently made and corrected that they were imperceptible, the airplane roared onward, profitably by the fresh southwesterly wind. One of the passengers, detaching his gaze from the panorama below, produced a pocket compass and checked their course. It was east-northeast. The spell of solitary absorption broken by his action, he touched the fellow-passenger seated in front of him and showed him the dial, with a dumb-show gesture of comment. The other man smiled companionably and pointed downward. They were leaving a thin foam-fringed coast of pale yellow beaches, drifting over a green-blue ocean where a myriad wave-facets scintillated in the sun. The two men leaned close together and repeatedly shouted the obvious in a desperate effort at conversation—the North Sea!

The other passengers, vaguely conscious of this breaking of individual isolation, looked round from their windows. One or two of them, ceding to the gregarious instinct hitherto repressed, imitated these pioneers and mouthed ineffectual words supplemented with a smile and nod. It was really very comfortable in this saloon, so comfortable in its solid construction, its luxurious equipment, that the sense of insecurity thus high in the air was called into abeyance. They glanced about them, appraised their environment, their companions, with perceptions no longer disturbed by the uneasiness of the moments preceding departure. Electric-lamp brackets provided for the contingency of a flight suddenly prolonged into the hours of darkness. A little door in the afterwall, led, by its indication, to a lavatory. Another little door, in the forward end, marked *Private, Entrée Interdite, Ingang Verboten*, aroused a vague curiosity by its suggestion of guarded mystery. As a matter of fact, it opened into a small compartment containing the petrol-tanks, pressure-ramps and so forth, and thence communicated with the cockpit where the pilot and mechanic sat in the open, behind their little glass wind-screens. But the passengers in the saloon, their vision bounded by their own immediate comfort, had no more thought of the pilot who conducted them than the traveler in a first-class railway-coach of the engine-driver.

They surveyed each other now with some interest, secretly surprised, perhaps, to find each other so normal in these unwonted conditions. One or two wrote notes on pieces of paper and passed them to each other, renouncing the excessive effort of verbal conversation. Only the man with the suitcase on his knees remained stonily indifferent to his companions, absorbed in his own thoughts. The two men in the front seats nodded and smiled to each other in the exchange of some idea readily comprehensible to both.

The talker of the pair looked down through his window—they were now over wide sea, dotted with small craft, the coast-line far behind—and then rose with a languid twist of shoulders fatigued by long immobility, to his feet. The other passengers watched him with mild curiosity. He smiled pleasantly at them,—a keen-faced young man with steel-gray eyes under well-marked brows,—showing white teeth under his little mustache as his lips parted. So

quietly confident, so engaging was his smile that some of the other passengers smiled back involuntarily in response. They watched him with the concentrated if unilluminated interest of minds undistracted by any other happening in this confined space, as with a calm deliberation he extracted a fair-sized card from one of his pockets. His companion had turned in his chair, sat twisted to face the other passengers, a quiet smile on his face also. Eight pairs of eyes turned automatically to the white card in the hand of the man who stood erect at the end of the saloon, his right hand in his jacket pocket. They might have been an audience at a conjuring-trick as they sat there motionless in vague half-expectation of his next movement. The man suddenly held up the card with its face toward them. There were words on it in heavy black type—two words, two amazing words: HANDS UP.

Eight pairs of eyes stared uncomprehendingly at this legend, unable for the moment to connect themselves with it. Then, with a variety of sudden facial gesture, eight pair of eyes found themselves staring as if mesmerized into the muzzles of two automatic pistols, one in the hand of the man who leaned over the back of his chair smiling at them, one in the hand of the man who held the card aloft. The man with the card had ceased to smile; he tapped his announcement significantly with the barrel of his weapon. To those startled passengers it seemed as though the earth had stopped. They forgot the airplane in which they were; they forgot everything except the menace of those utterly unexpected pistols. The man with the card smiled grimly and leveled his weapon at the breast of his nearest neighbor. Seven pairs of hands shot up above seven heads. The eighth man sat with his hands stubbornly clasped over the handle of the suitcase on his knees.

The man leaning over the chair-back ran his eyes over the surrendered crowd, marked the recalcitrant, pointed to him with an indicative motion of his pistol, significantly poised, and smiled with meaning. His lips uttered a word inaudible in the roar of the engines but clearly deducible from their rounded protrusion: "You!" The man with the suitcase sat rigid, hands tight over his precious charge as if his very life depended on it, and stared defiantly into the eyes that threatened him.

For a moment or two the group remained posed as for a tableau; the man on his feet still holding up his card, the man leaning over the chair-back still smiling grimly, both with their pistols leveled on their companions—seven pairs of arms held awkwardly aloft, and the eighth man stubborn in a frozen immobility where only his eyes were alive. He had, obviously, no chance. Even protest would have been inaudible. The airplane roared onward over the wide expanse of sea far far below

them, immensely too high for any jump of escape. They were isolated with their prey, these two well-dressed bandits who smiled with a grim suavity as they dangled their pistols and traversed them over the frightened little crowd. No communication was possible with the pilot even, except through that little door, and they were between it and their victims.

The second man rose lazily to his feet. He nodded to that defiant eighth man with a significant smile which assured him that he would be dealt with in due course, and took a step to the man who sat, hands above his head, in the nearest chair. The victim's eyes bulged with fright as the other man waved his pistol in front of him with a gesture that commanded him to stand up. The confederate ran deft hands through his pockets, produced nothing, shrugged his shoulders, pushed him down into his seat again. He passed to the next man, repeated the procedure, and



The crack of the pistol was a dull detonation in the ceaseless roar, the victim's yell of pain, a cry but faintly heard.

returned him also to his seat unpillaged. Each of the seven men with their hands above their heads was similarly dealt with, and upon one only was found the article evidently sought—a revolver which was promptly annexed. Then the pair of confederates, assured against interruption, turned to the man with the suitcase.

He sat absolutely motionless, his hands clenched over the handle in an intensity of grip which whitened the skin between his knuckles. His face was set doggedly in a determination so fixed that he seemed almost unconscious of the man who threatened him. Only his eyes betrayed a silent agony, terrible to look upon, as they stared straight in front of him. The two men stood over him, pistols leveled, and the eyes of all the other passengers turned to watch, fascinated, this drama which played itself soundlessly in the all-drowning roar of the engines which hurried them high above the sea.

One of the confederates tapped him on the shoulder as though recalling him to consciousness. The man's eyes turned from their vacant contemplation to look his adversary straight in the face. They continued to confront him even when the pistol leveled itself at his temple. Deathly pale though he was, not a muscle of his face moved. It was evident that he was exercising all his will-power in a supreme effort, fidelity to his trust a part of himself, hopeless though was his position. The grip upon his suitcase did not relax in the slightest.

The other passengers held their breath as they watched this silent duel. In that suitcase, evidently, was the booty desired by these daring robbers. Nothing else had been taken. They thrived with a horrible fascination as they saw the pistol come down and press its muzzle tight upon the back of one of the hands that held it.

"One!" The word was inaudible in the roar which filled the saloon, its purport only guessed after an instant of deduction from the lip-gesture which produced it.

"Two!" The man with the suitcase did not blench. His eyes, fixed terribly upon his tormenter, never wavered.

"Three!" The crack of the pistol was a dull detonation in the ceaseless roar that swallowed all other sounds, the victim's involuntary yell of pain, a cry but faintly heard. The watching passengers, drooping the tired arms still above their heads, saw him sink back in his chair, deathly white. He had fainted.

The two confederates had evidently thought out their plan in every detail. Without a moment's hesitation, one of them produced a file. The chain attaching the suitcase to the messenger's body was cut through in a few minutes of dexterous work.

Then, with a callous indifference to their victim's condition, they left him and went with their plunder to the forward end of the saloon. The man who had exhibited the card turned to the passengers and made a smiling gesture. The terrified little crowd dropped their aching arms. What was coming next? How did these two brigands propose to get away with the goods? The question asked itself in seven terrified minds, anguished in a new apprehension of further danger for themselves. The eighth man still lay back in a swoon, blood dropping from his hand to the floor.

The pair of thieves, however, did not seem in the least concerned. They smiled at each other contentedly, exchanged a word shouted close into each other's ears and nodded mutual acquiescence. Then one of them placed the suitcase on the floor and sat down in his chair again as though nothing had happened.

The other man opened the little door which led forward and disappeared through it.

OUT in the cockpit the pilot sat behind his little wind-screen and steered his course through the air that rushed by his head in a roar that mingled with the roar of the engines above and behind him on either hand, a roar that was heard, though muffled, through the close-fitting cap that came down over his ears, all other sounds excluded. Concentrated upon his task, his muscles moved almost automatically in control of the wheel-topped joy-stick that pivoted on its ball-and-socket base as he corrected the deviations, lateral and perpendicular, which registered themselves in a swing of the pointers of the floating compass and the aneroid close under his eyes.

Patches of rain-cloud, torn and heaped by that southwest wind, hung over the sea, and he drove into them—moist fogs in which the sense of direction was lost—with faculties quick to perceive any alterations of his level in the changes of atmospheric temperature accompanying them. His arms ached with "holding-up" the heavy machine which tended to dive forward clumsily in the air-pockets frequent in this stretch of unsettled weather.

From time to time the mechanic at his side, posted in vigilant observation of the gauges upon the dashboard, got up silently, conversation quite impossible in this blast of wind—and crept back to the compartment in the rear to tend to the pressure-regulating the flow of petrol and lubrication.

For a longer period than usual the pilot had sat with the sea at his side vacant. He began to speculate uneasily upon possible causes for the mechanic's protracted absence. Had anything gone wrong behind there? He looked at the gauges, saw that they were normal—half-turned his head in a difficult twist from his cramped seat in a questing but fruitless glance to the rear. The machine plunged slightly sidewise in this relaxation of his control. He pulled her up, renounced the effort to see behind him, concentrated himself for a straight course through the stretch of gray cloud that massed itself upon their track. Fog-wisps flung past him, collected on the wind-screen in beads and runlets of moisture that distorted vision.

Ah, at last—Thompson had returned! Without diverting his gaze from his instruments, essential for guidance in this dense fog, he felt the contact of the body that slid into the seat beside him. Confound this clumsy machine! He cursed to himself as he pulled the wheel close to him in denial of a swing-round, the needle on the aneroid, glanced to the half-gyrating compass card. A piece of paper was being pushed across it—Glad Thompson's explanation of the irregularity which had detained him. No—what the— Utterly bewildered, he read: "*Orders or I shoot—fly machine myself.*"

Good Lord, had Thompson gone mad? He glanced quickly to his left, saw,—not Thompson, but a stranger with a young, determined face, the hair of his capless head fluttering in the wind,—saw a revolver leveled at his eyes. The machine plunged heavily in his shock of astonishment.

He righted it, glanced again at the stranger. The man nodded emphatically, gesticulated with his mouth, tapped the wheel with his left hand while with the other he held his weapon leveled dangerously. Who in Hades was this? What had happened to Thompson? His brain worked with the quickness of one trained to lightning thought in a school of air-traffic where instantaneous deductions and decisions were vital—those diamonds! But what had happened to Thompson? Thompson was in fact lying stunned in the compartment by the pressure pumps, but the pilot imagined worse things. He thrilled in a sudden revival of old combative instincts. To blazes with the fellow!

He glanced again at him, saw his mouth frame emphatically the words, "*I shoot!*" his eyes flash a stern confirmation of the threat. What was to be done? He could not take his hands from the controls, grapple with this interloper. He thought of the passengers, their lives dependent on him, and was savagely perplexed.

Another scrap of paper was pushed under his eyes. "*Due course due north—or I shoot.*" Due north! That was out of the sea, away from the Dutch coast which they were now nearing. Should he refuse—hold on his course at all costs? He felt the muzzle of that pistol press against the cheek-leather of his helmet.

Lives were more precious than diamonds—he banked her nose in a slow left-hand turn. They shot out of the fog, roared between white clouds on a level with them, high above green blue water mottled with tiny foam-flecks. He glanced over his side to the sea below. It was empty of any shipping except at a far distance. No—what was that long thin streak of white foam trailed across the waves, a dark spot at its head? From their altitude of three thousand feet it was difficult to distinguish clearly the nature of that tiny craft a long way in front of them to the north. Was it to meet this boat that he had been ordered to change his course?

"Drop two thousand." Another message was pushed under his eyes. He hesitated for a moment, then put her head down in a furious suddenness. They plunged headlong with an abruptness that lifted his stomach in the sudden change of equilibrium. A long, long rushing nose-dive, his weight thrown forward upon the joy-stick, they raced down, engines roaring, toward the sea. The pilot smiled grimly. The passengers behind would be sliding out of their chairs, terrified in a prospect of imminent disaster. The man at his side, thrown forward also, tugged frantically at his arm.

The sea was close under them, its waves curiously large. He pulled the wheel of the controlling lever close into him suddenly, threw his weight back, "held her up" with all his strength. Her nose came up on the bottom curve (Continued on page 19)

In the

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The motorboat appeared startlingly close, oilskin-clad men waving frantically from her hooded deck.

THE work of Miss Synon has been and will continue to be a feature of this magazine. It is doubtful if she has thus far written a story broader or deeper in its human appeal than—

WITH SEVEN PARADISE PLUMES

By

MARY SYNON

Illustrated by

EDWARD RYAN

IF you happen to know any one of the thousands of little towns dotting the Mississippi Valley as thickly as stars shine in the northern skies above them, you know the place where Rachel Saunders was born and grew to girlhood. If you know any one of its scores of pretty girls who have just finished a high-school course and who can't afford to go away to college, but who help with the housework in the mornings, do French knots and stroll down to the Palace of Sweets in the afternoon, and entertain haphazard suitors in the evening, you know just what Rachel Saunders was when Jim Eldred met her. What she was when she left him is not the story of the town. It is a tale of joy and sorrow, of gains and losses, of land and sea, of men and women and horses—for Jim Eldred followed the ponies from Belmont to New Orleans, from Churchill Down to Juarez, from Havre de Grace to Havana; and Rachel would have followed him from heaven to hell in those first years of their marriage.

Nineteen, pink-tinted as a peach-blossom, radiant with dreams and desires that took wings like September swallows above the everyday life of the town, she was holding ready her accolade of knighthood for any courtier who would lift her from the rut of the place. Through every dusk the lights of Chicago, of New York, of London, of all the great cities of the world, gleamed luringly. If she had known herself to have any art or even any artisanship, she would have taken flight to the streets whose call came echoing to her heart, but summing up her meager abilities, she lost courage and took refuge in the hope of a rescuer to whom she would give love as well as gratitude. She saw him in every new man who chanced on the Square. She was only a little more certain than usual when she found Eldred there.

She saw him one afternoon in June as she came out of Duncan's. Bob Duncan, dispensing soft drinks at the soda fountain of his father's drugstore, had digressed from duty to persiflage while he had waited upon her. Because he was the most constant



of the few town swains who tinkled banjos on the Saunders randa and essayed one-steps in the Saunders parlor, Rachel smiled on him with the proper degree of encouraging sweetness. The smile was lingering on her lips as she caught sight of a man in front of the telegraph office. He had smiled back at her with a joyous camaraderie that brought the quick blood to her cheeks and sent her hastening past him; but she looked back over her shoulder as she turned the corner of the square. He was watching her, and still smiling. She went home with a fast-beating heart.

Two nights afterward she met Jim Eldred at the straw festival of the Centenary Baptist Church. In the meantime she had come to know—after the fashion of the little towns of the land—that he had business that took him daily to the Apple Creek Stock Farm, already coming into fame for its fine steeds. Men who sought the Apple Creek weren't given to tending at town socials, and Rachel's vanity thrilled at the thought that he might have come in the hope of finding pictures of a formal introduction, of evening calls upon her, of rapid and possibly serious courtship flashed across her brain. She flushed more deeply pink when Eldred stared at her from the doorway. Afterward she came to look back upon his wooing as the reason for what she called her folly.

Without introduction he crossed the room to where she sat a little apart from the bevy of girls not unaware of his presence. "Are you married?" he asked Rachel.

"No," she said, and blushed, then raged at herself for the implication that the blush flaunted. "Well, you're going to be married," he said, "if I can persuade you."

She laughed nervously, and tried to lead him into side channels, telling herself that he was only making game of her. He wasn't in earnest, couldn't be in earnest in his love for her, she told herself as she urged him to try the orange cake. Lords of Burleigh didn't come wooing in the Apple Creek districts. They married girls out of Broadway choruses, reasoned from a knowledge of Sunday supplements. She had twice with Bob Duncan, refusing Eldred's request, but she came to her with an imperious announcement that he was going to take her home, she weakened from her resolve to give him no leeway for philandering. "He'll be gone in a day or two," she told herself, "and it won't matter."

Under the June stars they sauntered down the street in a

at Rachel began to feel ominous. They were almost at the end of the walk when the man spoke. "I suppose," he said, "that I'll think I'm crazy. Perhaps I am. But there is only one way over do anything—and that's on the jump. That's the way I'm going you to marry me."

"Why, I—" she began, divided between delight of the moment and fear of its consequence. Something within her seemed to leap forward instant answer, yearning toward the man of the old eyes and the young smile, but dread of the unknown, and of the unwelcome in him, held her back.

"Don't say no," he pleaded eagerly, sensing her hesitation. "Let me have a chance. It's all above board, honestly. I haven't wife, nor seven children, nor anything like that waiting to grab for bigamy if you do. I know it sounds wild to ask a girl the first time you speak to her, but it had to be. What's your name, anyhow?"

"Rachel," she said, and laughed over the absurdity of a man's coming in love with a girl whose name he had not known.

"Rachel," he mused. "I like it. It sounds like the name of a woman who'd stick to a man. Why, that—that's what I think of you. That's why I want you—one of the reasons." They had come to the veranda of the Saunders house, and she motioned him to sit down in a swing sacred to Bob Duncan's visits. But he stood in front of her while she leaned against a post, and went on with an earnestness that she could not, if she would, have stemmed. "I want to tell you about myself," he said, "before you say any—"

She put her hand to the pillar with the feeling that she must steady herself against the overwhelming power of the man's voice. Ready a tremor of indecision seized her. What if she should—what if she should come to love him? What if she married him? It was an old dream, to be sure; but with the dream incarnated reality, she hesitated to snatch at the golden opportunity toward the life which she had been groping. "I shouldn't even listen," she told him.

"Yes, you should," he said. "It's only fair to both of us—"

and life hasn't given me too much square dealing. I'm not complaining, though, now." He lingered on the word, and she flushed again in the darkness beneath the cajo'ery of his tone. "Then ten minutes," she said.

"Othello with a time limit!" he continued. "Well, here goes." He braced himself as if for a plunge, then swung into the story that was to set his fate and Rachel Saunders'. It was the Odyssey of an unhappy, homeless boy, wandering the world with a passion for excitement and a vague dream of the home he had never had. To Rachel his eyes lost their keenness and became the hungry eyes of a child who gazed through the windows of life upon the feasts of other people's houses. "I've knocked about almost everywhere," he said, "wanting something so badly that I've almost gone crazy just with the want. I thought it was money, and I've made enough to keep me going, enough so that I can take care of you, all right. But it wasn't money. I thought it was travel, and I've trekked to Paris and Cairo and Shanghai and Bombay. I thought it was adventure, and I went gold-hunting in the good old *Porcupine*. But it wasn't adventure. All the time it was just you. I knew it when I saw you come across the Square the day before yesterday. I know it now, and I'm going to know it all my life. You're the only girl, and you always will be! Will you marry me?"

Somewhere down the street a woman's voice was singing a ballad that was new at that time. Through the soft moonlight that lay between the purple shadows of the elms floated melody and words:

Love comes but once—and then perhaps—too late.

All the poignancy of despair rang out in the music. All the desire for destiny quivered on the night. Back of the girl by the pillar lay the town, quiet, placid, its only voice a cry of warning; before her stood love and life. She had only to lift the latch to take their road. She looked up at Jim Eldred. "Will you be good to me?" she asked him, trembling at her own daring.



Rachel, watching them with passionate intensity, felt the affront of their comradeship as if it had been a slap upon her face. "I'm through with him," she kept telling herself.

"As good as God," he said with a strange awed solemnity in his voice before he took her in his arms. . . .

After his fashion Jim Eldred was good to his wife in the time that followed. Out of his wild way of life he had evolved a code which he followed to the letter. When he had money,—and he had plenty in those days,—he dowered her with everything she desired and much that she did not. Fur coats and diamonds and Paris hats for her bannered his prosperity and his generosity. "Strawberries in January while we have the coin," he would tell her. "We'll be eating hash some day."

"Then let's save for that day," Rachel would say sometimes, impelled by her training of domestic frugality, even while she reveled in the beauty of fine raiment.

"Why save?" he would laugh. "Can't I make more in a week than you could save in a year?"

If the tide of his faith in his fortune carried Rachel along past questioning either his methods of making or of spending money, she did not altogether cease from wondering about the righteousness of the source of Eldred's fluctuating income. She knew that he had purchased Vanity from the Apple Creek farm for five thousand dollars and sold the horse for as much again; and that six months later Vanity, winner of the Anne Arundel stakes at Laurel, had brought thirty thousand, to Eldred's poignant self-disgust. She knew, too, that he was betting money on the races. Their very wanderings told her that. They went to the South and came northward with the birds of passage. The people whom she came to know in the showy hotels talked tips and hunches and Pari-Mutuels and handicaps and track-records until Rachel Eldred grew dizzy with undigested information of the life into which she had been jerked by process of matrimony. Because she was only a girl, with her desire for seeing life in crowds not yet appeased, she would have condoned worse offenses than those of which she suspected Jim; but her association with his friends and companions had the inevitable result of breeding suspicion in Rachel, who could never take them, as they took themselves, at face value.

Try as she might, she could not hold down her desire to peep into the *Bluebeard's* closet of Eldred's life, not knowing that the way of wisdom in marriage is pretense that there are no such cubbyholes in the building. Day after day, as she sat in hotel parlors while Jim was away on some phase of his semi-mysterious business, she listened to stories and innuendoes that served to augment her curiosity. Then she would reason that Jim was no better than the men with whom he associated. What had she known of his life except what he chose to tell her?

"DID you ever love anyone else?" Rachel asked Eldred one night in Hot Springs, after a veranda session of feminine cynicism had left her strangely worried.

"Good Lord, no!" he said. "What ever made you think that?"

"Well, Mrs. Durgan said that no man—"

"Look here, Rachel," he said, "if you go listening to a lot of old women, you're going to make yourself plenty miserable. May Durgan has a good heart for the down-and-outers, but a tongue that wags in the middle. She married old John when she knew that he never loved anyone but his first wife, and never would. Now she's paying the price of it, and she's sore on mankind. Let her alone, Rachel. Let 'em all alone."

"But I haven't anyone else to talk to when you're away."

"You poor little kid!" he said, instantly contrite over his outburst. "It's a shame, isn't it? But it's the only way I can have you with me, and I have to have you, even if the old cats tell you that I loved a hundred girls before you came."

"Don't you think, Jim," she ventured, strengthened by his laughing tenderness, "that we'll ever have a home of our own?"

"I have a home now," he said. "It's wherever you are."

"I mean a real house."

"You bet we'll have it," he promised. "Just wait till I make a big enough stake, and we'll settle down—maybe in Apple Creek."

"Oh, not there—in a city somewhere."

"It's all the same to me."

"New York?"

"If I make a million."

"Do you think you'll ever make it?"

"Worse men have. And while we're waiting, we're living pretty well, aren't we?"

"Jim," she said earnestly, "don't you know that it isn't the money that counts with me? Don't you know that I could be happy if we were poor, so long as I had you? And sometimes I'm afraid to have you make money, lots of money. I'm afraid I'll lose you to some of those awful creatures like Letty Bragdon or Doris Elton or Panama Peggy or—"

His laughter rang through the hotel room. "Rachel dear," said, "I grew up with that gang. I know them inside out. It isn't one of them worth your little finger."

"But if men just loved women for their worth—" she began in the worldly wisdom of May Durgan.

"I wouldn't love a cross, suspicious old harridan like you all," Eldred teased her—then kissed her into happiness.

For if it was the excitement of the life that she had loved at the beginning of their marriage, it was the man whom she was coming to love with terrible intensity through the wandering years. With no other outlet but him, she expended on him the affection and care that other girls of her upbringing divided between husband, home and children. To her he was a combination of little boy who had never grown up, a wise lonely youngster who gazed at her for comforting as he had gone to look at the hearth-fires of homes when he had been homeless, and of masterful man who dominated her. She never thought of which aspect of him to expect. "Life's all winning or losing," he would say, then add sometimes with unwonted emotion: "Except where you're concerned, Rache dear. I couldn't bear to lose you."

"I'll be pretty hard to lose," she would laugh.

"I'm not so sure," he would say.

THE first test of her loyalty came when they had been married four years. It had been a bad season, beginning at Laurel, but they had gone the summer circuit and were in Baltimore when the crisis came. Eldred lost day after day until his philosophy was wearing as thin as his bankroll. The reserve which he had always held began to dwindle. The hope he had bought in the hope of quick turn-over of his investments sickened. Some of them died. He plunged recklessly at the de Grace, and came down to earth with the speed of a falling airplane.

Eldred faced with disdain the thought of poverty for himself. He had been poor before. He would have plenty of money again. The idea of causing Rachel to suffer any privation, however, distressed him immeasurably, and he flayed his soul with bitter reproaches for his recklessness. Fear that she would not understand his point of view and that the disaster would precipitate a serious breach between them dragged his footsteps from the station to the hotel where Rachel awaited him, but with characteristic determination he plunged into the worst of the cabaret.

"We're broke, Rache," he said. "It's hash for us for a while." To his utter amazement the girl's face grew radiant. "We've had a good time with the money while it lasted. Let's have a good time without it."

"It'll be just a little while," he promised. "I'll get on my feet again. I shouldn't have—"

She put her hand over his mouth. "Nobody's to blame," she declared. "Where do we move to?"

They found a place in a lodging-house on a street near the Monument that had once been fashionable. The house itself was a relic of a departed aristocracy, and Rachel discovered in faded splendor a hinge of interest and in its light-housekeeping arrangements a real plaything. "I like it better than the hotel," she honestly, she told Jim as they unpacked their clothes, too far now for their background. He shook his head. He was giving to her the feeling of her importance in her husband's life brought out the best in Rachel Eldred; but hard times, brought to Jim Eldred the fear that he had wronged his wife in taking away from comfort in the dull life of her home town, brought out the worst in him. Even as Rachel yearned over him with strange, heart-tugging tenderness, he drew away from her in the lest she weigh him by the present and find him wanting.

In time she began to feel his alienation without knowing the reason. At first she thought that she had fancied him cold. Then she chanced, by the instinct of love, on the real reason, but when Eldred refused to thaw beneath the sunshine of her cheerfulness, she sought farther. The seeking brought her to the door of *Bluebeard's* closet.

Jealousy, like all air-plants, thrives best in tropical atmospheres; and the environment in which Rachel Eldred thrived was close to the edge of the mental tropics. Something unaccountably lawless heated the blood of men and women on the race-track grandstands or beside the gaming-tables. Luck and love and hate ran high. The other woman stood at the back of every card game. Had not May Durgan, veteran of a hundred meets, triumphed in her wanderings of countless Ulysseses? Had not she herself seen the ways of the Letty Bragdons, the Panama Peggys, the Doris Eltons? Doris Elton! In the very naming of her the thought

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Rachel Saunders was holding ready her accolade of knighthood for any courtier who would lift her from the rut of the place.

was born. Jim had always liked her, the big, flashy, dark-haired, dark-eyed woman of the daring gowns and resplendent hats whom Rachel had loathed at sight. He had even defended her against Rachel's outburst of accusation. "Doris isn't as black as they paint her," he had said.

Remembrance of a score of incidents to color suspicion rushed over Eldred's wife. Out of them she painted a gallery of pictures to torture herself. Jim was with the other woman in those hours he spent away from their room in the dismal house that had by that time lost all its vestige of romance. How else explain his absences? How else interpret his desire to keep her away from the grandstands? In the old days he had let her go. Refusing to believe that his pride made the barrier, pride that dreaded her vision of his ill fortune on race after race, she sat alone, building her *Frankenstein*. Even when Eldred came home, his reserve but gave her new elements of construction.

MISERABLE with her imaginings, she set forth at last for the confirmation she dreaded and yet felt she must find. Jim had gone to Pimlico in the early afternoon. With grim purpose she boarded a street-car and followed him. It was a gorgeous day of October sunshine on the hills of Maryland, and the oval within the course gleamed green as an emerald set amidst the topaz and rubies of yellow maples and russet oak-leaves. The band was playing with blaring gayety as she threaded her way up to the crowded grandstand, seeking a point of vantage over the paddock where Jim was certain to be. There was a thrill of reckless animation through the crowd into which she came; but Rachel Eldred was insulated from it by her overpowering suspicion. "I know he'll be with her," she kept telling herself as she found place beside a protecting pillar.

In every fairy tale the wandering human always finds whatever it be that he has gone forth to seek; and if we did but know it, life gives to us the same doubtful blessing. We win what we chase. Rachel Eldred hunted wretchedness as surely as Jim Eldred sought money that day, and both of them found the end of their roads in the hand of Doris Elton. For Rachel, scanning the restless crowd, saw the picture of her fancy come true. Eldred and Doris Elton stood in the paddock, talking with an earnestness that revealed even to an observer less casual than Eldred's wife their interest in each other.

Rachel, watching them with passionate intensity, felt the affront of their comradeship as if it had been a slap upon her face. The blood ran stinging through her veins and pounding at her heart until she had to clutch at the pillar for support. The action brought back to her mind with bitter contrast the memory of the night when Eldred had asked her to marry him, the night when she had stood by the pillar of the veranda of the house back in the Apple Creek country and asked him if he would always be good to her. Thought of his answer stirred the depths of her suffering, till out of her agony she laughed hysterically. A man beside her turned to stare. "Did you lose?" he asked sympathetically.

"Yes," she said, "I've lost." She hurried away from sight of the confirmation of her jealous fears.

"I'm through with him," she kept telling herself all the way back to the city; but when she came into the room filled with so many of his attributes as well as of his belongings, the resolve weakened. How could she leave him now when he was poor? He had given her lavishly when he had money. Her own code, as well as his, demanded that she hold to her "for worse;" but she promised herself that as soon as his luck turned, so would his wife. She promised, too, that until that time she would make no mention of Doris Elton; but she reckoned without her anger.

At dusk Eldred came in radiant.

"You're a little fool. I suppose you think you loved Jim Eldred."

"Stop it!" he commanded, finding her paring potatoes for coffee on the gas-plate their lodging afforded, "We're going to have a party. I won today."

He drew out a roll of bills, pulling off two gold certificates to give her. "It's not much," he said, "but it's a turn in the tide."

"What race did you bet on?" It was the first time she had ever questioned his methods.

"The fourth—Candle-Light. Eighteen twenty-four on the Mutuels for win. I had the tip, and I took the chance."

Without stopping her work she looked over her shoulder, examining the roll of bills in his hand, and remembering how long he had possessed before he left. "Who loaned you the money to bet?" she asked him. Then, before the look of anger that flashed over his keen eyes, her own wrath blazed. "Doris Elton?"

"Well, what if she did?"

"Do you think it's fair to me to take money from women like her?"

"Why shouldn't I take it from her? I've known her since she was a kid. I've loaned it to her when she was broke and I was flush. Why shouldn't she loan it to me?"

"Oh, if you can't even understand—"

"I understand perfectly well. You're the one who doesn't."

"I understand too much. Perhaps you think I'm blind, that I haven't seen how you were going back to her, that I—"

"What are you talking about?"

"About you and that woman, of course."

"See here, Rachel," he began with visibly maddening patience, "you're all upset and excited over the way things have been going. It's been hard for you, living like this; but we're on the way to New Orleans, and we'll be laughing over the way we've scrambled on two meals a day. I don't blame you for flaring up. It's been pretty tough, I know. But as for Doris Elton—"

"Have I ever said anything about being poor?" she demanded.

"Have I ever complained? I haven't minded it. I could make it fun. It's you who have hated it. All that has hurt me is that you act as if I weren't your wife. You won't share your luck with me. All you think I'm good for is sunny days. When you're down, you keep away from me. You go to her, then, and tell her where you stand, and take her tips, and borrow money from her, and—"

"You don't understand, Rachel," he repeated, dulled for the moment by her tempest of scorn.

"I don't want to understand," she cried. "If this is the way of life you brought me into, I don't want to know any more of it."

"Just as you please," he said coldly, his keen eyes glowing with the white fire of fury. He caught up his coat and cap, and with no further word flung out of the room.

While twilight grayed and blackened, she sat beside the window, looking down upon the twinkling lights of the harbor. She groped her way through emotions, believing them revelations. In their light she felt that she had made her terrible mistake in marrying Jim. He had never belonged to her world, and she could never belong to his. He loved Doris Elton—had loved her before he had come to Apple Creek.

He tried to tell herself that he had only married her out of a fit of pique at the older woman; but even in her anger she could not accept that belief in that suspicion. Jim had surely loved her for a time, although he no longer loved her. How could he love her when he had married Doris Elton and borrowed from a woman like Doris Elton? No, this marriage was a mistake, and the sooner they parted the better. She would wait, she told herself firmly, only until he was really on his feet again. Then she would go somewhere, anywhere, and start her living.

In the dark she cried for her own misery, stormily, softly, like a tired child, until she fell silent from exhaustion.

(Continued on page 63)



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Jane was no longer a voluntary prisoner. In sudden terror she flung herself at the door. She was caught!

The story so far:

THE best possible bargain with life—the highest price for her beauty—had been the ambition of Jane Lang, the discontented daughter of the conservative socialist Daniel Lang. The thread of her life became interwoven with those of others—with that of Peter Ogus, a radical Russian who claimed to be a prince and yet the friend of Lenine; with that of Cleghorn Islip, son of the wealthy packer Abner Islip, her employer; and with that of Major Weeks Ledyard, a former personnel officer with the A. E. F., who had taken a similar position with Islip. So too Cleghorn Islip's life-thread had become entangled with those of Jane Lang; Anna Clotts, his crudely attractive stenographer; and Ruth Deyo, a nurse in charge of the hospital at the Islip plant.

Young Islip, passing through a congested quarter in his car with Jane Lang, ran over a small boy. A crowd gathered: "Beat it!" Cleghorn ordered Jane, and she fled from the scene and from newspaper publicity—but not from recognition. For a Red named Keenan saw and recognized her.

Keenan went to Jane's father and threatened to spread a scandal about Jane if Lang didn't lend his influence to the Reds. Lang's reply was to choke Keenan into insensibility.

Cleghorn had agreed to meet Anna at a lonely spot on the lake shore. He arrived in time to see Anna murdered by her jealous lover Borginski, a Red and a friend of Keenan's. And as a result Cleghorn was himself accused of the murder and blackmailed by Keenan and Borginski.

Meanwhile Keenan had sought revenge on Daniel Lang. A bomb Keenan had sent through the mails had killed innocent people. Keenan sent a partly finished bomb to Lang, then "tipped

As this remarkable novel of 1920 draws to a close, its drama mounts to heights seldom achieved by those American novelists who are writing the fictional history of our day.

A DAUGHTER OF DISCONTENT

By CLARENCE BUDINGTON KELLAND

Illustrated by FRANK STREET

off" the Federal authorities to search Lang's house. Jane found the bomb first, however, and hid it from the officers. Then she left the house, determined no longer to live under the same roof with such a man as she believed Lang to be.

Ogus met her, and masking desire under simple friendship, found a room for her with Mrs. Clotts. Lang, seeking her, went to Abner Islip, and the two fathers became friends. Cleghorn was questioned, but he knew nothing of Jane. Meanwhile Jane had learned, through Ogus' repulsive advances, what marriage without love might mean. And Mrs. Clotts learned, through an overheard conversation, who had murdered her daughter Anna.

CHAPTER XXVI

ONE often hears of individuals whose hair has turned white in a single night. Cleghorn Islip's hair did not turn white in a night, but a change took place in him greater than the mere alteration of the color of his hair. He had been gay, had viewed the responsibilities of life lightly and had gone on his charming way, making friends, doing some damage, achieving nothing. A single night inverted his character.

Instead of being gay he was silent to taciturnity; instead of seeking pleasure he sought solitude; carelessness was changed to a caution in all his words and actions that could spring from but one thing—and that thing was fear. Others had done the work laid out for him at the office; now he plunged into work with a sort of feverish energy—the energy of a man who tries to keep some fearsome thought from arising in his consciousness.

Weeks Ledyard noted these changes, not with the satisfaction

a friend ought to feel in the reformation of a friend, but with apprehension. He knew there was no reformation of the spirit, but rather a reformation by shock. That something had happened was evident. Ledyard had seen the conclusion of the event. He knew, too, that Cleghorn was being watched, just as he knew that somebody had come to his rooms to see Cleghorn on the afternoon following that night at Finney Chagnon's. Cleghorn was afraid. His fear was two-fold, so Weeks believed: first there was the fear of the thing that had happened on that night; second was the fear of some individual who knew of those happenings. He was certain Cleghorn was being blackmailed: Cleghorn had asked him for a considerable sum of money which he had not been able to lend.

What Ledyard did not know was that Doc Keenan and Omar Borginski compelled Cleghorn to report to them daily—as a sort of lesson in obedience and a demonstration of their power over him. He did not know that either Borginski or Keenan watched and spied upon Cleghorn's every movement, and that wherever Cleghorn might be, he had but to turn his head to see one or the other of those men, scowling malignantly or sneering triumphantly.

Keenan had intelligence of a sinister kind. Cleghorn was not the first man whose will Doc had labored to break—and had broken by just such methods. With a sense almost barometric your expert in blackmail can tell the succeeding states of mind of his victim, and when the moment arrives for the demand that will ruin. If Cleghorn drove in his car, a taxicab followed him. When he alighted, one of his masters alighted and became visible. If Cleghorn sought the solitude of his rooms, his telephone would ring, and he would hear Keenan's voice say: "Just called you up to let you know we are on the job."

ABNER ISLIP, informed of his son's commendable attitude toward his job, was delighted; but his delight was not lasting. His son's manner was not a manner to bring delight to a concerned parent; and there was still the unexplained mystery of Cleghorn's brief disappearance and of Ledyard's manner when questioned by him and Daniel Lang. It was apparent to Abner that some escapade had gone awry, that something had happened to his son which had frightened the boy. In his anxiety he went to Cleghorn's rooms to seek a confidence and to offer the aid a father should offer to a son in trouble.

Cleghorn was pacing up and down nervously. The boy's face was gray; his fingers twitching open and shut.

"Just came up for a chat," said Abner Islip casually. "Sit down and smoke."

"Can't smoke. Can't sit down. Got the fidgets."

"Sick?"

"No."

"I have good reports of you from the office. They tell me you've taken hold. Glad to hear it. As soon as you get the run of things there, I want to move you. You find the business interesting?" Abner asked the question wistfully.

"Eh?" Cleghorn had not heard.

"You've gotten interested in the business?"

"No—yes. A fellow's got to do something."

"You're the fellow," said his father with an attempt at lightness, "who has to learn how to run a billion-dollar business."

Cleghorn nodded absently, his eye on the telephone apprehensively, as if he expected something fearsome to appear out of its receiver.

"Look here, son," said Abner seriously, "you don't look well. You don't *act* well. Feel done up?"

"Feel first class."

"Sit down, wont you? I want to talk, and I can't talk with you walking up and down the room."

Cleghorn dropped into a chair, but before his father had completed the first sentence, he was on his feet again to resume his pacing to and fro.

"Son," said Abner, "I've been your father a good many years, haven't I?"

"Eh? Yes, I suppose so."

"Have I been a satisfactory parent?"

"Never thought about it. Yes, of course."

"Have I ever been hard on you—when you've gotten into scrapes—so that you're afraid of me?"

"No."

"Ever think that it's a father's business to get his son out of scrapes, that it's a father's *first* business to do that?"

"No."

"If anything serious happened to you, Cleghorn, would you come to me with it?"

"I—I don't know."

"You'd be afraid to come to me and make a clean breast of it, wouldn't you?"

"Can't tell how I'd act if anything happened."

"Let me tell you how I'd stand: if you did something involved in something—bad, I'd be mighty sorry; but *whatever* it was,—*whatever* it was,—I'd back you up. I'd get you out of it—no matter what—if it cost me every cent I have in the world. If you did a murder, I'd buy the whole State, to save you."

CLEGHORN stopped so suddenly as to startle his father and stared with frightened eyes. Murder! What was his father knowing? What was his father hinting at?

"I'm just telling you that, son, so you'll know how I stand. I'm your father—your father. I want you to feel you can rely on me."

The telephone rang, and Cleghorn rushed to it precipitantly. Doc Keenan's voice came to him. "I'm making a date with you young feller—tomorrow morning, entrance to the Islip Building half-past nine. *You—be—there.*" The last was a threat.

Cleghorn had uttered no word of reply. He hung up the receiver with a feeling of cold despair. If his father would go, would only leave him alone!

"I know—I know," he said nervously.

"Then, son, why don't you?"

"Why don't I what?"

"Make a clean breast of it. Let me help you out of the mess."

"There isn't any mess."

Abner Islip lifted his shoulders and got wearily to his feet. "It would save you all this worry," he said. "Sooner or later I will have to come to me. Tell me about it now, son, and I'll see what's to be done."

"There's nothing—not a thing. I don't know what you're talking about."

"You won't trust me, then. . . . Well, good night, son. When you're ready to come to me, I'll be waiting."

Cleghorn hardly knew when his father left the room, but presently he was aware that he was alone. He fell into a chair and laid his head upon his arms. His fists were clenched. He quivered from head to foot. Even he could see that he could not long continue so; something must happen, some climax. He rather hoped for it, whatever it should prove to be. At least it would be the end of this torture of uncertainty, of this ever impending threat. And what had he done to deserve it? Very little. He had kissed a girl—who was willing to be kissed. That was all. He had done her no real wrong—and this condition was the consequence!

For a kiss which he had not really desired, which he had given carelessly, he was paying with his life, with a spoiled life, with a life that had become unendurable. For that small thing he carried a murderer's weight. He had wrecked himself. Even if he continued to live, if there came no crushing climax, he would not be his own man, but a slave. He could not live as other men lived, have the freedom of other men, and the happiness of other men. He—he could never marry! Ruth Deyo gave rise to this thought, and his bitterness increased almost to unendurable proportions. He loved Ruth Deyo, but he could never tell her so—*he*, as guilty as a murderer, certain to be convicted of murder, could never ask a girl to share his life with him. And anyway, she would hate him. She despised him now; that was evident.

The only way is to walk a chalk-line. You can't take any chance. That was the way his thoughts ran as he accused himself. It was nobody's fault but his own! He was a fool. He had acted like a fool.

"If I could only start over again!" he said to himself, and groaned at the impossibility of a new beginning. His bed was made and he must lie in it.

But one thing he saw, and saw it with a force with which it was given to few men to see. He saw the value of rectitude. It was always go decent you can't get in a mess," was his way of expressing it to himself.

It has been said that no man can add a cubit to his stature by taking thought. Perhaps the physical height cannot be increased by the mind, but the moral stature can grow in no other way. Cleghorn of the thinking that passed through Cleghorn's mind that night was boyish,—but some was sound, clean, sincere, manly. His stature was increased by it.

CLEGHORN'S agony might have been increased had he known that a friend was following the road to his secret. But he did not know. The friend was Weeks Ledyard.

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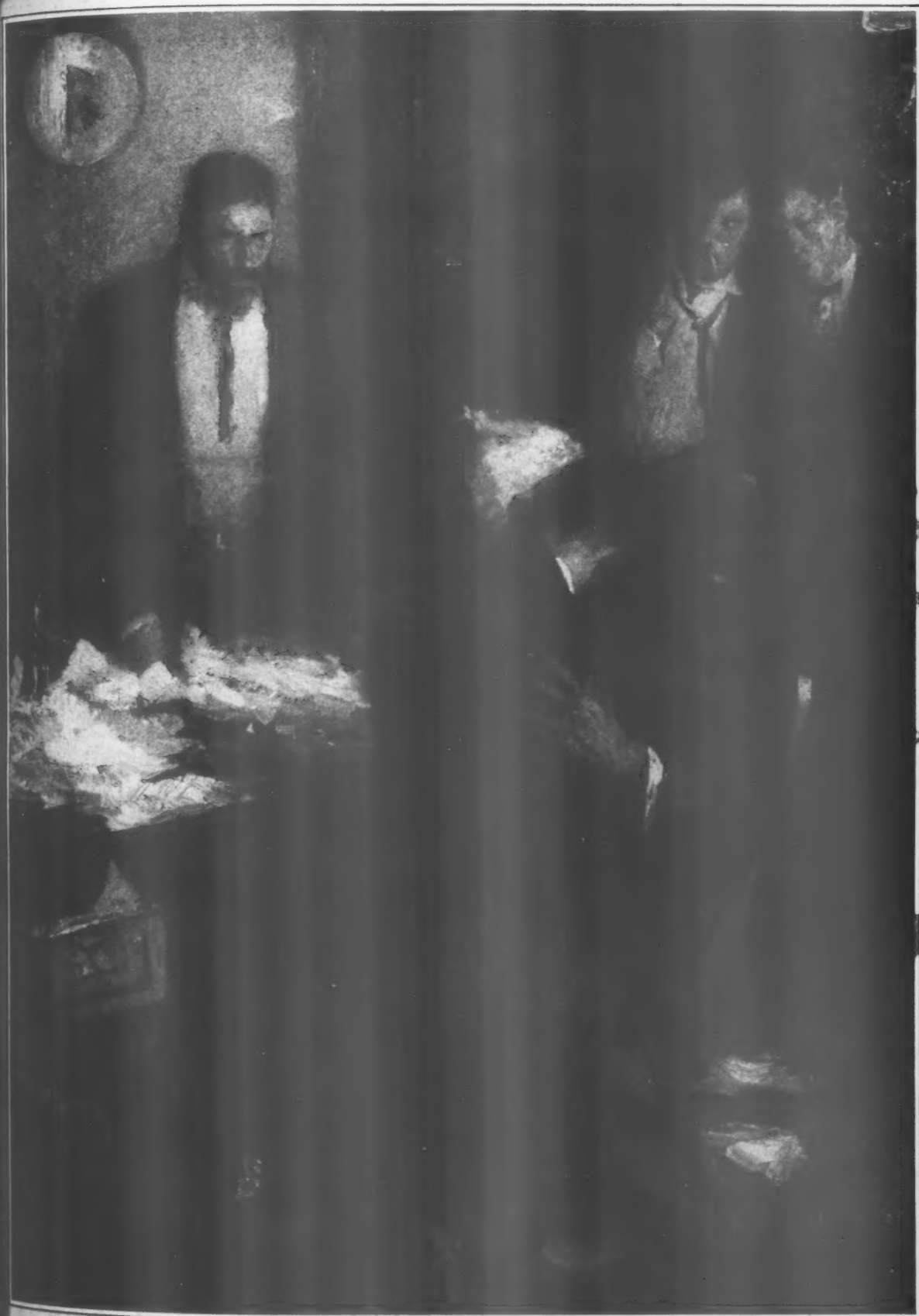
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Cleghorn was at his father's side. His father had saved him, had redeemed his promise. *At what cost?*

and Ledyard had determined to discover what was wrong with his friend. He reasoned that if Cleghorn was being watched, those watchers might be discovered if he too watched Cleghorn. It was not difficult to accomplish, and he saw. He saw the same man or men always at Cleghorn's elbow. Once he saw Cleghorn pay to one of these men a sum of money—and he recognized the men, Doc Keenan of the I. W. W., and Omar Borginski. At once Ledyard gave over watching Cleghorn, to devote himself to a close and searching study of these two men. He found it profitable; indeed, he found it dovetailed with the obligations of his position with Abner Islip.

On the night when Cleghorn took thought, and taking thought, increased his moral stature, Weeks Ledyard discovered that Keenan and Borginski met with other men behind Henry Clotts' little bookshop, and he discovered that one of these other men was Peter Ogus, celebrated in the sensational press as the Bolshevik prince. It was information for which he knew the best disposal, the most efficient use. In the army the Personnel and the Intelligence departments had been fully aware of each other's existence.

At the moment when Ledyard was disposing of his information in the fittest way, Cleghorn was getting into bed, hopeful of sleep. The boy was exhausted—and the exhausted sleep.

In the morning he opened his eyes to the recollection that he had been ordered to meet his masters at half after nine. It was a command he dared not ignore. He drove downtown in his own car and stopped before the building given over to his father's offices. Inside the entrance Doc Keenan and Borginski waited for him with a man whom he recognized as Peter Ogus.

"On time," said Doc in his sneering, oily voice. "You get a credit-mark; promptness is a virtue."

"Well, what do you want now?" Cleghorn demanded.

"You'll find out soon enough. We been savin' you up

for a purpose. What we been gettin' out of you is jest incidental, as you might say. Now we're comin' down to cases."

Cleghorn said nothing—there was nothing to say.

"Well?" said Keenan irritably.

"Oh, for God's sake tell me what you want and let me get out of your sight."

"He don't like to look at us, Omar. Well, you ain't handsome." He turned to Cleghorn with narrowed eyes and hardening of features: "All you got to do is what you're told. Git into the elevator."

Cleghorn obeyed, too agitated to reflect on the meaning of the command.

"Tenth floor," said Keenan.

"That's my father's office," Cleghorn said, realizing suddenly.

"Exactly. That's where we get off."

"I won't."

"Just as you say. Nothin' to us. If you don't, why, you know where we go from here."

The car stopped, and Keenan pushed Cleghorn's unresisting figure from the car.

"Git us in to see your father—*Pronto*, no monkeying," Keenan whispered in his ear.

"To see my father! What do you want with him? What are you going to do to my father?"

"Nothin' to him. He's safe as a church. We jest want to talk to him with you present, see? That's all. Git busy."

"I won't."

Keenan's fingers pressed into Cleghorn's arm. The moment

had come for which Keenan had worked, for which he had laid out his actions to sap the strength of Cleghorn.

"Quick," he whispered. "No monkeyin'—now."

Cleghorn spoke without his own volition; words came that did not command. Doc Keenan was master, in that part of his mind as well as his body.

"We want to see Father," he said slowly, expressing the clerk in attendance.

"Go right in, Mr. Cleghorn. He's alone."

With Omar Borginski on one side and Doc Keenan on the other, and Peter Ogus cutting off the rear, Cleghorn walked down the corridor toward his father's door.

CHAPTER XXVII

CLEGHORN fumbled blindly with the doorknob of his father's office door. Borginski's twisted hand brushed him aside and flung the door open, pushing the boy into the room. Abner Islip looked up from his desk, smiling a smile of welcome as he saw the three men who were his son. He did not speak, but his eyes moved searching from Borginski to Keenan, to Ogus and back to Cleghorn. There was a brief interval of silence.

"Who are these men?" he asked. "And why do you bring them here without permission?"

"He didn't bring us—we brought him," said Keenan.

Borginski shoved Cleghorn forward. Cleghorn's eyes gazed at his father's deathly gray face; they were eyes that begged for succor.

"What does this mean? Who are these men?" Abner Islip said sharply.

Peter Ogus stepped forward, took a step toward his father. "My name is Ogus, Mr. Islip, and these men are named Borginski and Keenan. They have business to talk with you."

"What are you doing with these men?" Islip said, looking at Keenan and speaking directly to his son. Cleghorn opened his mouth to speak, but only shook his head and turned away his face.

"We brought him, like I told you. He's a nice boy. He does what he's told," said Keenan.

"I'll do the talking," Ogus said, not in his ordinary, ingratiating voice, but sharply, commanding. Then: "Mr. Islip, your son is a murderer. We can prove it."

Abner Islip's face did not change except for a compression of the lips, but he leaned forward a trifle, and from that moment he did not turn his eyes off Peter Ogus' face. He seemed not to wink.

"Go on," he said.

"These are the facts. Your son had a stenographer named Ledyard Clotts. He carried on a love affair with her until it was detected. She was discharged. She was troubled some. She wrote your son demanding a meeting at a roadhouse on the lake shore. He met her in that lonely spot and killed her. Her body was found yesterday. Keenan and Borginski were eye-witnesses to the murder. They have the letter written by your son making the appointment."

"Well?"

"They are the sole witnesses. One not in this room knows your son was at that place on that night."

"Yes."

"In this State the death penalty is by hanging."

Abner Islip did not move his eyes from Ogus' face, but he spoke to Cleghorn.

"Is this true?"



Cleghorn stopped and stared with frightened eyes. Murder! What did his father know?



The bedroom door was thrust open violently. There stood Weeks Ledyard and a companion . . . She knew he had heard her promise to Ogus.

"It's a lie. It's a lie. I didn't kill her. I was there. I saw—
that man kill her!" He pointed to Borginski. They—knocked
me down—and accused me."

There sounded a rumble deep in Borginski's chest, and he raised
his hand menacingly.

"You knew this girl, Cleghorn?"

"Yes."

"Did you wrong her?"

"No—not what you mean. I am telling the truth, Father.
You've got to believe me. There was nothing."

"Did she write you a letter?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because—she said she loved me."

"Did you make her love you?"

"I—I have kissed her—nothing more."

"What was this girl's character?"

"I—don't know."

"You went to this meeting?"

"Yes."

"Where the murder was done?"

"Yes."

"You saw that man kill her?"

"Yes."

"Why did he kill her?"

"I don't know."

"Tell exactly what happened."

"I—was worried—and sorry for Anna; and I went to see her.
I had done her no—no real wrong; but I was ready to—give her

money. It was very dark. Down the lane to the dock I heard
a scream. Out on the dock a man was striking a woman. He
threw her in the water. Then these men knocked me down."

"And searched you?"

"Yes."

"And found the letter."

"Yes."

"Cleghorn, did you kill this girl?"

"No. No! I'll swear it."

"I believe you." He spoke now directly to Ogus. "These two
men are prepared to swear they saw my son kill this girl. They
have that letter. That is the situation."

"Exactly."

"You have not denounced him?"

Ogus smiled.

"You have come to sell your silence—and the letter."

"Yes."

"How much?"

"Not money."

"What?"

"Your son is a hostage. I will explain myself fully—and
without reservation—because, as I said, your son is a hostage."

"Go on."

"I am a revolutionist. I am the head of the movement in this
section. My friends are revolutionists. This revolution will
succeed, and the present government will be replaced by the soviet
system. On a given day there will be a general strike. On that
day the strong men in the country—will not be able to act. There
will be a negro uprising. The miners (Continued on page 140)

"Thy name, fairest
maid, thy name!"
She hesitated, flush-
ing slightly, "I am
Natica Strong."



BRANNIGAN

By LAWRENCE PERRY

Illustrated by
GEORGE WRIGHT

CERTAIN reports reached old Caleb Armbruster, chairman of the board of governors of the Seven Pines Hunting Club, which utterly ruined his breakfast and sent him posting out to the clubhouse at the unholy hour of nine o'clock in the morning.

His angry eyes very easily found evidences which corroborated information he had received to the effect that the night and early morning hours had held the club in the thrall of a condition comprehensively to be defined by a phrase which the Eighteenth Amendment will eventually relegate to the limbo of dead things—to wit, a very large evening.

"Mr. Nobs," said Armbruster, gazing with severe eye upon the process of restoration which the superintendent of the club had inaugurated in the club grill, "who is responsible for this?"

The superintendent turned toward the stanch old man, his face revealing conflicting emotions.

"It was the master of hounds, sir—Mr. Trafford."

"Tommy Trafford!" Trafford was so important a cog in the club machinery as to enforce upon Armbruster the necessity of some revision in the sweeping disciplinary plans that were formulated in his mind. For Trafford had sound Long Island hunting connections. And the Seven Pines Club had not as yet that swagger social sanction which it hoped some day to possess.

"You see, sir," explained Nobs, not failing to divine a certain mitigation of mood on the part of his superior, "Mr. Trafford was giving a bachelor dinner at his home before going on to New York for the wedding."

"I know all about the wedding," was the testy interruption.

"Yes sir—quite so. Well sir, about midnight the party arrived here, and—"

"And drank more liquor, I suppose."

"Yes sir, stock that Mr. Trafford has in his room—not all of it, of course. Mr. Trafford remarked that he intended to turn this club into an oasis. Oasis, was his word, sir—into an oasis."

"I see." The sturdy old man nodded grimly. "And they had a pleasant time?"

"Oh, very pleasant—very pleasant indeed, sir. Harmless, sir—oh, a bit boisterous, but harmless, sir, considering that Mr. Trafford left a check for the damage. Very pleasant sir, very enjoyable—nothing really amiss, sir, at all."

"You—" Armbruster checked himself abruptly as a girl in evening-clothes suddenly appeared.

"Were you at the party last night, Mr. Armbruster?"

Framed in the doorway of the apartment, she was an attractive representative of the outdoor type of young woman. Her eyes flashed with animal spirits, and her resilient figure and garb were combined in an impression meet for any hunting-club in the west.

Armbruster made an inarticulate sound. Natica Strong conveyed him with a smile. "Who was it, Mr. Nobs," she now inquired, "who rode Demon into the club and upstairs to the sleeping rooms?"

"Eh!" Armbruster started as though by galvanic impulse. He turned upon the hapless Nobs. "I understood you to say, that it was all quite harmless."

"So it was sir, quite so. It was very nicely done, sir. No accident, sir—nothing broken. Mr. Trafford said it was the most extraordinary feat of horsemanship he had ever witnessed, sir."

"You mean to tell me that they took Trafford's Demon out of the stables and drove him through the club without damage?"

"Yes sir. I do tell you, sir, it was handsomely done."

"Yes!" Natica's eyes sparkled. "I was just speaking with one of the grooms; he said he never saw anything quite so remarkable."

"Who was it? Who did it?" inquired Armbruster, continuing to make headway against indignation.

Nobs scratched his head.

"I don't altogether know, sir—except they gave the gentleman's name as Brannigan."

"Brannigan!" Armbruster frowned. "Of course that isn't his name."

"I don't know, sir. He is put up with us under that name."

"Put up! Then he's—" The old man paused.

"Yes sir, he is with us now—or I should say, he is in bed."

"Then he wasn't one of the wedding-party?" inquired the girl.

"I think not, Miss Strong. I—I—" The man lowered his voice, glancing about him. "I gathered he was pretty much of a stranger to most of the party, although evidently he had been at the dinner. He was the life of the evening here."

"H'm!" Armbruster turned toward the door. "And Mr. Trafford put him up here under the name of—Brannigan?"

"Yes sir, for ten days. I understood him to say he wanted a good rest—Mr. Brannigan, I mean."

Armbruster snorted.

"I should fancy he might. Nobs, I want you to see that the bill for this rumpus which you present to Mr. Trafford is adequate."

"Oh, quite so. Mr. Trafford himself instructed me to that effect, sir."

"Very well." Armbruster nodded at the girl and went out to his motor.

The girl smiled at the superintendent, who smiled back.

"It must have been worth while, Mr. Nobs. It surely must have been worth while."

"It was, it was!" he laughed. "They came in about midnight like a band of Indians." He glanced at her. "The whole town, I suppose, will go down to New York for the wedding."

The girl shrugged. "I imagine so. I—" She stopped abruptly, and Nobs tactfully turned away to give an order to the charwoman.

Trafford and Natica had once been excellent pals—still were, for that matter. But like other of Natica's pals, he had come to her a few months previously with that little manner of embarrassment she had come to know so well, and:

"Natica, old girl, I want you to be the first to know the fact of my—" and so forth.

Every man she knew could like, could swear by, Natica Strong, would come to her for sympathy, advice, assistance—and ask some other girl to be his wife. Women would say: "Now, there's Natica Strong; how amazing it is that she of all girls doesn't marry!"

It wasn't that despite her accomplishments on horseback, at golf and at tennis, she was not utterly feminine; for feminine she was in the finest and most wholesome sense. But it may be that her athletic ability overshadowed this fact in the minds of those with whom she hunted and played. Where you find a Diana, there, no doubt, you find young men fearful of the fate of Actæon.

Not that Natica worried much about it. She was a cheerful, upstanding, healthy give-and-take girl whose age, which was twenty-five, is not one at which one is greatly concerned over a future, immediate or remote. But she did miss her friends when they went off and married. And now Tommy Trafford's wedding was going to ruin cherished ambitions of winning the final leg upon the Armbruster Cup for mixed polo fours. She had reckoned a lot upon Tommy, whose skill at number three had counted materially in past successes of her combination. Of course he was out of it, would be on his

honeymoon when the game was played. None the less she would have to accompany her uncle and aunt to the wedding, and smile and appear interested, when she didn't wish to smile and was not interested one bit.

It was all quite upsetting—so much so that she had gone off on an early morning gallop to bring herself to an equable frame of mind. The idea of a solitary breakfast holding something of appeal, Natica walked into the dining-room with a sort of dogged air, taking a table by a window which gave out upon a rose garden and a perfect lawn. Aside from a waiter or two, there was no one in the apartment.

Natica found the silence meet for her mood. The fragrant morning breeze entered and moved the curtains leisurely. It was good to be free, she thought. Then her eyes lighted with interest as a young man entered the room.

He was the festive Brannigan, no doubt. In appearance he gave no suggestion of having passed a rather hectic evening. Quite the contrary, he appeared as fresh and blithe as any new rose outside. In some undefinable way he impressed the girl as an exotic, at least so far as Seven Pines was concerned. Slightly above medium height, with fine shoulders and carriage, he had something of a dandified or dilettant air. His eyes were somewhat narrow, Natica decided, and he was abstractedly fingering a thin, spiky mustache as he stood in the middle of the floor, deliberating.

At length he moved to a table immediately adjoining Natica's and sat down facing her.

"Good morning," he said.

Natica without hesitation smiled slightly and nodded. The



He turned his horse in upon her, seizing the bridle of Natica's mare near the bit. "Why did you do that?" she cried furiously.

man summoned a waiter and gave him his order in a clipped voice the nonchalance of which was tempered by a pleasing cadence.

"You know,"—he was speaking conversationally across the table as though he had known Natica always,—"breakfast is quite the most satisfactory of all meals."

The girl evinced polite interest.

"Perhaps it hasn't occurred to you," he went on with the zest of a scientist analyzing some phenomenon, "but it has to me. In the first place, one is certain to be hungry. And secondly one doesn't have to wade through a silly menu wondering what dishes to order. Some all-wise gustatory expert did all that for us long ago—a bit of fruit, coffee, eggs with bacon, toast and jam of various sorts. It's wonderful, just as wonderful as the man who thought of putting chopped onion on caviar, mayonnaise on lettuce—"

"I see you've given the subject a great deal of study," observed Natica.

"Well—" He paused, glanced at her sharply and then smiled infectiously. "I am getting rather profound over nothing at all."

Natica laughed. "I didn't intend to be rude. I'm sorry."

"Quite all right." He bent over a dish of strawberries, while Natica resumed attention to her interrupted meal.

LATER the man lighted a cigarette, glanced over the headlines of a newspaper and then addressed Natica, who was not hurrying to leave the table:

"If you were here last night, I hope we didn't disturb you."

"I wasn't here. I heard about you, though."

He laughed reminiscently. "They were bully, the whole lot of 'em—Trafford particularly."

Natica stared at the man. "Then—then you were not acquainted with Tommy Trafford?"

"Oh, yes, indeed. But do you know,"—he chuckled,—"I think I know him much better now."

Natica studied him, puzzled. "Last night was his bachelor dinner—"

"I understood so. Yes. You see, I came in quite by chance. Learned I had blundered right into this wedding mess. Nothing would do but I must stay for the dinner. I did."

"You're going on for the wedding?"

"Not I. No, I'm put up here for a week or so."

"And your name is really Brannigan?"

"Eh?" The man looked at her curiously.

"Tommy Trafford put you up as Mr. Brannigan."

"The deuce he did!"

"Yes, he did. But since apparently we've met, I don't wish to call you Mr. Brannigan. The name doesn't seem to—I mean—"

"I'm sorry."

"Oh, if your name is Brannigan—"

"It isn't much of a name, is it?"

"Don't be mean, please!"

"Oh, I'm not. I could have chosen many a better name had it been my lot to choose. How have you been favored?"

"I don't quite understand you?"

"Thy name, fairest maid, thy name!"

She hesitated, flushing slightly. "I am Natica Strong."

What mysterious influence is it that establishes friendship, or common understanding, as it were in a flash, whereas so often that which is enduring and fine and deep in human relations requires time for the cementing? What current is it that flies from soul to soul and in that flash is appraised, approved and beyond all chance of error sanctioned? Who can tell? Who has ever told?

They were smiling at each other.

"You know," he said, "you are not really a stranger to me."

He arose and moved to her table, seating himself and leaning forward. "I have seen you at Meadow Brook. I have seen you at Cedarhurst, at Piping Rock. I have—" He interrupted himself: "By George, I've seen you in France—not really you, you know, but your sort."

"I was in France," she said quietly. "Nurse's aid in the Red Cross."

"You would be, yes. . . . Do you ride?"

She had been looking out the window. Now she glanced at him proudly.

"Rather! I mean, after a fashion."

He was regarding her tentatively. "Wouldn't a dash over the country go rather well? Trafford made me free of his mounts in the club stables—which was decent of him. I'd like to take a hack at that beast Demon with something other than bedrooms and portraits of club fathers for a background."

Natica hesitated, her eyes glistening.

"Are you serious? Oh, I'd love to. But—"

"But?"

"We're all going down to the wedding on the ten-thirty," she glanced at her wrist-watch. "I have just an hour to motor home and dress. Uncle and Aunt—I am sort of an adopted daughter—are having a fit at this moment, no doubt."

"Hang weddings!" he exclaimed gloomily.

"That's what I say. I don't wish to go at all. You see, wedding things have rather interfered with an ambition of mine," she arose from the table. "My mixed polo four won the club championship in 1916 and 1917. Then we all went to the war. Three months ago Jack Hansen married, which took my number two. Now Tommy's gone, relieving me of my number three."

Brannigan clutched sympathetically.

"You've no idea, really, how horrid it is. My team had won twice. We play next Saturday—Bertha Hansen's team—for the final ownership of the cup. She has Jack, of course. He's a three-goal man, the best in the club up forward. Charlie Jensen would do fairly well in his place if he only would play his game and not rag everyone all over the field. Nina Pond will play number two. As for a number three, I haven't decided. Tommy will be away on his honeymoon."

"Inconsiderate," smiled Brannigan. "Am I eligible?"

"A club guest? Of course you are!" Natica's radiant face turned doubtful. "You play, of course."

"Oh, a little." He shrugged. "Don't make a mistake through being polite."

"You can't possibly be much worse than the chaps who are available."

"That's encouraging."

She studied him with interest. "I hate the idea of that wedding."

"They are bores. That's the reason I never married."

"I—I—" Natica hesitated. "I really haven't time to do. Do you know the idea of that ride grows?"

"Why not?"

"I could telephone Aunt Cordelia and say to her that matters have come up. It would be the truth; you have come up."

"So I have, to be sure. While you're phoning, I'll go up and put on some riding-clothes."

Sometime later Natica emerged from the telephone booth wearing an expression of one who has been through an ordeal, indeed she had been. Natica's aunt was not one lightly to brook avoidance of a function so solemn as a wedding.

But the ride that followed compensated Natica for all that she had heard over the wire from her outraged aunt. Indeed, she never forgot that ride. The June skies were an even turquoise deep, unfathomably deep. Billowing up from the horizon were clouds of iridescent whiteness. The air, fresh and cool, was laden with bloom, and every color note had infinite variety of character. They jogged along the highway for a mile, and then Natica turned from the road, putting her mare to a low stone wall and entering a stretch of meadow-land which, checkered at intervals by willows and lines of brush, went on and on toward hulking hills in the blue distance.

"Good country for fox-hunting," observed her companion, entering easily at her side on Trafford's mettlesome gelding. "Good for fox hunters, I should say." His gray eyes snapped as he took in the country. "Poor fox, he hasn't much of a chance here. See too far. Same in any stone-wall country. Now, Long Island, where you strike so many plowed fields—"

HE rattled along. He was jauntily, blithely talking satisfied, apparently with life and with every immediate perspective. With Natica he was utterly at ease, taking for granted a certain comradeship which as a rule was more difficult to attain. It aroused in the girl a certain personal interest not peculiar either to her sex or her character. She began to wonder whether he was such a horseman as he had tacitly admitted himself to be. There came the intense desire to prove him.

In the middle of one of Brannigan's sentences she touched the mare with her crop. The next instant both the man and the balance of his remark were well in the rear.

Directly in front was a drainage-ditch which the mare took with wings. Natica, bending slightly forward heard the drum-beat of hoofs behind her and then a thud as Brannigan's big brown gelding took the jump and came on apace. Then almost in her ear she heard the cool, level voice.

"I shouldn't wish to improve upon your seat in that jump, Miss Strong."

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No one had the slightest doubt that Brannigan knew all about polo, and that Demon knew no less; the two were veritable flames.

A desperation seized the girl, the desperation of a humiliating conviction that the man was riding well within himself, that he had no intention of any such ungallantry as passing her. Ahead was a five-foot stone wall lined with heavy underbrush, and on the other side a slope of upland—a hazardous jump, one that had never been attempted. But toward it she urged her horse like a thunderbolt.

She heard her companion's exclamation. It thrilled her. The next instant he had flashed up to her side. He was rising in his

She nodded grimly, surreptitiously pressing her heels into the belly of her steed, whose nostrils quivered, whose hoofs assaulted the earth with ever-increasing beat. The mare was at a full gallop—and yet, always in her ear that voice.

"Bully, Miss Strong! I like a stone-wall country, provided—" She put her mare to a rasping barrier of rough stone, and the animal took it like the lion-heart she was. Relaxing from the strain, Natica heard Brannigan pounding at her flank. "Well taken! Deucedly well taken!"

stirrups, looking ahead. The next instant he had turned his horse in upon her and launched himself forward in his saddle, seizing the bridle of Natica's mare near the bit; and despite her frantic effort to keep the mount upon its course, she found the steed swerving to one side until finally both horses broke into a canter, their flanks sweeping the harsh branches of the brush.

"Why did you do that?" she cried furiously.

"Because you mustn't be an idiot."

"You were afraid!"

"Well, frankly, I didn't relish it. It might be done. I've seen worse done, as a fact. But the truth is I have begun to like you too well to see you run the risk of a lot of broken things."

"Have you, really?"

"Yes, I have, really, Miss Strong."

She stared at him, flushing, not quite understanding.

"I'm going to make that jump, Mr. Brannigan."

"Oh, no, I think not."

"Please let go that bridle."

"If I do, you'll try that wall and hurt yourself, or your horse. Promise you won't."

"I sha'n't promise anything."

He jerked the bridle a bit sharply as she suddenly urged her horse to one side.

"I'm sorry, Miss Strong."

HE sat there on his horse, cool, smiling, not masterful—merely solicitous, yet absolutely determined. No other man she knew had ever tried anything like this.

"Isn't this a silly sort of scene, rather?"

"I'm glad you realize the sort of spectacle you're making of yourself," she flashed.

"Oh, I do. It's utterly absurd. I never felt quite such an ass in my life. A sculptor, I imagine, would pick us as sort of a group in that category, don't you think?"

To Natica's dismay an impulse to smile became irresistible. She looked away, but the man divined her new mood.

"Promise," he said.

The desire to do as he asked was sudden and thrilling. It seemed as though the very depth of her being was warmly involved as she faced him, nodding.

"I promise," she said. Then her eyes fell.

On the homeward ride Natica's manner was a bit constrained. Her uncharacteristic capitulation to this man, an utter stranger, had come, as it had seemed, naturally enough, but in retrospect she could not understand the processes which had brought it about. There was the fierce desire to eliminate from her mind the memory of that surge of emotion which had filled her when she had met his eyes and said, "I promise," and then perforce had looked away.

"Why so glum?"

"Am I glum?" The girl straightened in her saddle and faced him.

"You know," he said, "I'm a little that way myself. I think if I ever ride with you again—Am I ever going to?"

"I hope so, Mr. Brannigan."

"If I ever ride with you again, I hope it will be in the late afternoon instead of the morning."

Natica glanced at him curiously. "Why do you say that?"

"Because from now on I'll have merely a wonderful memory with nothing ahead; whereas with a ride in prospect late in the afternoon, I'd have all the day in which to look forward to it—to you."

She laughed mockingly.

"It's true, nevertheless. . . . When are we to ride again? This afternoon, perhaps?"

"This afternoon I shall be making my peace with an outraged uncle and aunt. I shall be pretty well occupied, believe me, sir."

"When shall I see you?"

"Oh, we'll have polo-practice on Thursday and Friday next."

"And today is Saturday! Have a heart, lady!"

AS a matter of fact Natica called him up at the club next morning and asked him to accompany the family party to church. To her surprise he evaded the invitation.

"You know," he stammered, "I am here essentially for a rest. My physician, as a matter of fact, instructed me to keep away from people as much as possible."

Natica, by nature direct, laughed, not too mirthfully.

"And that was the reason you attended that bachelor dinner?"

"Look here, Miss Strong, you don't understand. I didn't want to go to that ruction, honestly. Trafford rung me in before I

was really aware. Then it was too late to buck out. That's literally true."

"Is it so?" Natica's voice was formal now. "I'm sorry you can't go to church with us. Good-by."

But it wasn't good-by. Brannigan came to call that afternoon. He was so serious, so contrite, that Natica forgave him his force—or practically so. She presented him to her uncle, who was also her guardian, and to her aunt.

"You are not Mr. Stephen Strong?" Brannigan was staring at the older man.

"Yes, that is my name, sir," was the stanch reply. Natica fancied she saw Brannigan start. If so, he quickly recovered himself.

"I have heard a great deal of you in banking circles," he said. Thereafter he succeeded in making headway so pronounced with the fine old patrician couple that he, the cause of Natica's absence from the most important wedding in which a member of the community had ever been involved, soon stood in better favor with them than did their recalcitrant niece.

It was five o'clock before Natica dared attempt to rescue him from her uncle.

"I promised Bertha Hansen I'd come over for tea; she's having a lot in. It will be an opportunity for you to meet everyone. Mr. Brannigan."

"Oh, tea!" His smile vanished. "Will there be many there? That is, will there be persons there I've not met?"

"Why, no doubt." The girl's voice was tinged with impatience. Then she laughed. "Surely you're not afraid of strangers?"

The man gazed at her.

"I told you, Miss Strong, I'm here essentially for rest. Really, you've no idea how I am done in. I'm in that plight where strangers afflict me—honestly. Can't we sit here and talk? I want it so. Must you go?"

Natica flushed. "I'm afraid I must, Mr. Brannigan. You see, I promised—"

He hesitated. Obviously he did not wish to go. But Natica was perversely determined he should go. He rose slowly.

"Then, of course— I'd like to resume that talk over the vagaries of sterling exchange with you some other time, Mr. Strong."

"Good enough!" The man did not insist upon immediate assumption, as Brannigan had evidently hoped he would.

Natica took him away in triumph. But she came to be alarmed at finding herself irritated over the reticence and obvious desire to be aloof which characterized his demeanor at the Hansen. She did not want him sulking alone in a corner, his face hidden behind a teacup; she wanted him to shire.

A REMARKABLY clever and entertaining young man, that Brannigan, observed Natica's uncle that evening. "Where does he come from? Who are his people?"

Then it was for the first time the girl realized she knew nothing whatever about him.

"He's—he's a friend of Tommy Trafford's," she said. "He—he—" Her voice dwindled away.

"Humph! Then he must be all right, of course."

"All right!" Natica gazed at her uncle. "What do you mean, Uncle Stephen?"

"Nothing, nothing at all—except that for a young man so generally talkative, he seemed exceedingly reticent concerning himself and his affairs. Still, that may have been due to a desire to emphasize his importance. He may be a mere stock-clerk somewhere, for all I know."

"Oh, I think he really amounts to something," protested Natica.

"I think, Natica," observed her aunt, "that it is beginning to be high time you made sure about this. If he was evasive with your uncle, who didn't handle him, if I may say so, with any great skill—"

"Very well—very well, my dear. Let me attend to this," replied her uncle.

Under cover of the mild passage at arms that followed, Natica moved to the hall telephone, her thoughts revolving swiftly. His behavior at the Hansen's, she now recalled, was not a new phase of personality. Now that she thought, she could remember glances, speculative, if not furtive, whenever he was suddenly confronted by a stranger. She shrugged. After all, her main interest in him was that polo-match on the coming Saturday.

Moved by some impulse, she called him up at the club and discussed details of the impending game which she had over-looked in the course of the afternoon. It proved to be a long conversation—not all of it polo talk. (Continued on page 73)



"Monsieur, I beg you think not so hard of me." "Think not of it now," said Drace. . . . The priest devoted himself to his sacred office.

PERIWINKLE HOUSE

A Tale of the Mississippi in the Days of its Greatest Glory

By OPIE READ

Illustrated by DEAN CORNWELL

The story so far:

THIS story of a Monte Cristo of the Mississippi takes us back to another Reconstruction period, the days just after the Civil War: the father of Virgil Drace, a young Ohioan, had been murdered by guerrillas under command of one Stepho la Vitte, who had also carried off a young woman of the village and her child. After the death of Virgil's mother, some years later, the young man journeyed to New Orleans, seeking revenge upon the criminal and hoping to learn the fate of the kidnaped woman, daughter of a neighbor. On the journey Drace picked up a quaint character, one Liberty Shottle, who became a sort of *fidus Achates*.

In New Orleans, Drace met again a young woman with whom he had become smitten on the boat—and learned she was the daughter of La Vitte! He also became involved in a carpetbagger riot, saved a man from lynching—and got himself ordered out of town for his pains. But in the hour's grace given him he obtained a clue to La Vitte's dwelling-place, a house in the swamp some distance up the river, and with Shottle he took an up-river steamer and journeyed to the home of Shottle's uncle, General Bethpage, which was not far from Stepho's abode.

Exploring in a canoe, Drace found Stepho's dwelling-place

Periwinkle House, and in the old guerrilla's absence paid court to the daughter Nadine. On the way back he was treacherously set upon by one Tony and another of La Vitte's followers, and left bound to perish in a burning cabin. Nadine, however, arrives in time to rescue him.

Some days later, in a casual tavern encounter, Drace, while unarmed, saved General Bethpage's life when a strange old fellow attacked him. The assailant, worsted, made off. Then: "Now, who the devil was that?" asked Drace.

"That, my dear Drace," replied the General, "was the fellow you asked about the other day—Stepho la Vitte."

CHAPTER XI

TO Drace this encounter with Stepho la Vitte, the father of the girl he loved,—and the outlaw upon whom he had sworn to wreak vengeance,—was disturbing indeed. The General, however, was not at all upset by the fact that he had been barely saved from Stepho's knife. For the General was still in the midst of his moral freedom; and when a short time later they boarded the *Bumblebee* on their return, he gripped Major Pewitt's hand and said:

"Major, Mr. Drace and I have in our precious possession three quarts of old Tobe's wild grape."

"Ha—which is as much as to say that you have three quarts stewed out of the heart of Venus. I'll find Hawkins, and the four of us will gather in the Texas and—and flatter the stars, by gad! But Tobe lied—said he didn't have any of the old stock left."

"And a liar's wine is sweet, my dear Major. Come, Virgil, my boy, put all brooding out of your mind. Brooding is for the poet when the nag is tired, and not for us. We'll have a night of it, and then we'll return to respectable servitude and slow moral decay. My dear Major, lead on. We follow."

The Major brought out some gold-lined silver cups, won from a thief. Old wine must be drunk by the mind as well as with the lips. Drace could not drink it in mellowed recollection of the past; neither could Hawkins, these two young men impatient that the future did not rush toward them; and slowly and in silence they sipped at it, yearning to get away. They went out, and the General uncorked another bottle.

"Major, I fear, sir, that I must kill a man," observed the General.

"Well, you are not very busy, are you?"

"Ha! I had hoped that during even my leisure I might always be too busy for that. I have never killed a man personally,—I mean in single combat,—have prayed to escape it; but now I fear it must be."

"This juice makes me feel that I'm in love with somebody and don't know who. . . . What have you got to kill him for?"

The General enlightened him, and the Major sipped his wine.

"Impudent old fellow!" he said.

"Scandalous, my dear Major. . . . I was not armed, but he shall not catch me defenseless again."

"I wouldn't let it worry me, General. I'd shoot his head off, look at my watch and say: 'Who has the correct time?' By the way, old Josh—"

"Yes, I was going to ask you."

"I leaned against the jack-staff and laughed. You see, I heard Shottle explaining his jute scheme to him—that wildcat deal I loaned him money to go into; and as I had never been able to lay hand on a dollar of my money again, I says to myself: 'Here's a chance for revenge.' So in I chimed. I said that it was an opportunity of a lifetime. Old Josh coughed and gagged. He took out his check-book and put it back into his pocket, walked away, still gagging. But I knew that he couldn't spew out the hook, and told Lib to wait. Josh came back and wrote out his check. Within four hours I had the money myself."

"What a rascal you are, Major!"

"At your service, General."

The old gentleman opened the last bottle, repeating his catchphrase, "The sweet of the night!" And now the wine insisted on a serious and philosophic turn.

"When our war ended," said the General, "some people declared that religion was dead. And I thought so myself, but what an error! War in fact revives and strengthens religion; and there is no prayer more fervent and devout than the prayer offered in the open Temple of Janus. The more we are smitten, the more we pray. And I believe that if the entire world should fall into the chaos of war, there would afterward come the greatest religious revival that man has known. . . . To your continued happiness, Major. War destroys art, makes masterpieces of literature dull, drowns heart-music with its screaming fifes; but it brings out the sublimity of Job and haloes anew the Cross on Calvary."

The Major held his cup to his lips.

"Again your health, General, and may you get your man. . . . War and religion are man's early inheritances."

"As true as the ocean is salty, sir. . . . By the way, how's your game tonight?"

"Full blast, and scaly with suckers from tributary rivers. Shall we go down?"

"Yes, after this last swallow. I am looking for moral freedom, sir. . . . Let us go."

THE remainder of the trip back to Bethpage was a matter of moral freedom at the gaming-table for the General. For Drace it was occupied with the hot struggle between thoughts of his grim mission against Stepho, and his longing for Nadine. For the time being, however, the beautiful girl who had rescued him from the burning hut triumphed. She had promised to see him once more on Thursday. He would keep the tryst.

Presently the *Bumblebee* made Bethpage Landing. And the General's hospitality was at once so warm and so gracious that Drace felt no hesitancy in remaining for the time being under his

roof—until Shottle's return, at least. That night after when his wife Tycie had left, the old gentleman lit a cigar for a long time sat smoking in silence; and Drace was silent looking through the lattice at the moon, love's slow time stopped and stagnant in the sky.

"Virgil?"

"Yes, General!"

"Have you a pistol, sir?"

"No; I had one, but I lost it."

"Well, provide yourself with another. In saving me from a deadly assault you have mortally offended old La Vitte. He is in no wise afraid; but neither is he gallant, and would shoot without warning. You told me, you remember, of your appointment to meet old Spence tomorrow. I haven't any too much confidence in him; he might play you into the hands of Stepho. I advise you not to go fishing with him."

"Spence? No, that's not the name of the old fellow I'm acquainted with. His name is—Spillers, I think."

"I don't know a man of that name in the neighborhood. Anyway, arm yourself and keep a sharp lookout."

And then they sat and smoked in silence, inhaling the breath of the night.

CHAPTER XII

WITH the first gleam of Thursday's light Nadine arose and stood looking out from the window. The vine would hug the dark to hold it from going, and she put its thick tangles to welcome the rising of the sun. Her father had come in late and was to depart again early for the hills; she was afraid lest he might have changed his mind. She saw him moving about, but she waited a long time before she went to meet him, so sweet it was to stand there at the window and catch the first ray of the sun.

The old man hummed a jagged tune; in a garden of roses it would have been a briar. Nadine came out, and gallantly kissed her hand, laughing softly; and then as was his wont, kissed her hair.

Her duties about the house were light, but he helped her, when their queer assortment of plates and dishes, gold-china, china, crockery, stoneware and tin plate, had been washed and away, they sat in the shade of the house, the girl anxious and wondering.

"I have sent Tony back to the ceety, as I tell you I will," said to her. He does the good work to burn the spy, the cane baggair. Now he have spree, with the red wine an' the wine. When the time come, he be back. I have need of heem with the cattle that I buy. He drive them. . . . Up at the town Nadine I have trouble. The ol' scoun'rel Bethpage! I go in the morn'g, he is there, sing, laugh, eat an' look at the darky dance. I say, Then I go up. We have words. He jump up. Then the young man, big, he grab my wrist like this. He squeeze. I say: 'Monseigneur you was ver' strong. I see you again.' An' when I do, I be heem. I hear old Bethpage call him Vergeel. The old man keel too, eh?"

"Oh, no—no!" she cried. . . . "Let us go away somewhere. They will never let you alone. It will be better to be in the city than here."

"Just a little while longer we stay in this place, eh? Then I meet Monsieur Boyce in Memphis, an' you marry him, an' I take you away for the honeymoon, per'aps to France. An' I buy you the silk dresses an' many beautiful things. An' then come and join you, an' we all live happy—eh?"

"But—but I do not like Monsieur Boyce!"

"Ha! You learn soon. He is a fine man. Wait till we see him in Memphis an' you know him better. You will love him, then, an' be happy. . . . I go now. *Au revoir, ma p'tite*."

Stepho went down to his boat, feeling that he had outwitted the impatience of the swamp, and she ran back to her room, to get through the window. But soon she came out with a big leather-bound book of plays and put it on the ground beneath the vine. Then with a broom made of stiff twigs she swept the ground, unstrung a caterpillar swinging down and carried it away out of the range of her stage. From the house she brought a narrow strip of rush matting, spread it beneath a tree, raising one end as if to form of it a sort of back, a sofa. From the house she brought a box, to serve for a table, and from out beyond the palisade of cane she gathered lilies, plucking from the leaf a great bloom that looked like a trumpet. These she hung on the low-swaying branches of her playhouse trees, or with sharp

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"Ha! My fine carpet bagger, you keep my knife from the General. Who will now keep my knife from you?"



Drace found a rope, looped it in a hangman's noose and tucked it beneath his coat.

pinned them to the rugged bark, a curtain to drape the wall above her "pretend-like" divan. She sat down and waited a long time. The cane stirred, and she seized her book, opened where a lily-stem marked her favorite play, and made herself believe that she was reading.

It was only a breeze that rustled in the cane. She could hear it now, lipping amid the glossy leaves above her. Why should she be impatient? She could wait. Had she not waited night after night for her father's footsteps? Had she not sat in the house, alone and not afraid, when the storm tangled the tops of the cypress trees and lashed the bayou mad? . . . She had not heard a sound, but looking by chance, she saw Drace coming through the cane, and she sprang up to meet him, the play-book pressed against her bosom.

"Nadine!"

"Monsieur!"

"Don't call me 'Monsieur.' Call me Virgil."

She dropped her book. He bent to pick it up, but she snatched it from beneath his reaching hand and stood back from him.

"Oh, it was you, then! It was you the so strong man that would break my father's wrist. It was you!"

"Nadine, it was not to hurt him. With a knife he would have killed an old man; and then they would have hanged him. Nadine, my other hand held yours, to protect you."

"It must be true. I will believe you—Virgil. I know you brave and not wish to hurt an old man. No, you could not do that. You will forgive me, yes?"

She held forth her hand, and taking it tenderly, he touched it with his lips; and like a princess she accepted the homage due her rank and her beauty.

"Come, now, we play," she said, sweetly laughing. "And it must be free, like the boy and the girl. But first you sit down here and tell me."

She led him to her "sofa" and they sat down, leaning back against the tree.

"Tell you what, Nadine?"

"About the great big world you know so well."

"I don't know the big world, as you think it. But I know the universe as I feel it. It is here."

She looked at him, so close to him, and how beautiful she was, there at the end of his eyelash! Not much had he been given to verses, but he felt that in his love for her the muse might inspire him to immortal fame; and then he knew that not even the more visual art of the painter could reflect her in her warmth, the soft glow of her eyes, the thrilling gleam of her smile. A brush gathering its color from the palette of exactness might have touched her cheek with a freckle here and there, but not even a merciless camera set close to search for blemish could have robbed her countenance of its ever-varying charm. A woman—and in play a child!

About her finger she sat wrapping the lily-stem that had marked her favorite play. Was it that she did not understand his reference to his universe? No, for she shook her head, and with a sigh that did not mean weariness.

"The universe could not be on this little island."

"It could be held in your dimpled hand." "Oh, my hand dimpled!" She held it front of him, touched his brow with the palm. "It is not soft enough to be dimpled, Virgil."

"I would kiss it soft."

He caught her hand, touched the tip of each finger with his lips and then kissed the palm. She looked at him, drawing back her hand.

"You must not do that. We must talk of other things."

"Yes, but first let me tell you of my dream."

"I do not like to hear of dreams. We always hear them and make up something we did not do. . . . But did you not tell me once?"

"No, I don't think so. In my dream you touched my heart with a torch and set it afire."

"But I would not do that. I would save you from fire. Ah, and Tony he has gone to the city, but when he comes back, we must watch close. . . . One time I tried to take my hand, and he said he would kiss me. And I say: 'That may be, Tony. You can kiss me, but it will cause you stronger. But when you have, then you are dead.' And he knew that I speak what was to come."

"We care nothing for him. Let him keep out of our way. . . . And when I saw you at the ball, I knew you were the girl with the torch. And do you know what I said to myself?"

"You said: 'Bad girl to burn my heart!' Yes?"

"No, not that. Let me whisper it to you."

"There is no one to hear."

"I said: 'You are to be my wife.' And just then you turned about and looked at me."

"But I did not see you."

"Come, now, you must have seen me."

"Well, perhaps. But I did not say: 'I am to be his wife.' I did not say that. And it cannot be, Virgil."

"But it is going to be, all the same, and you know it. What is all this universe for if that is not to be? Why was this little island cast up here? Why did the word ring forth: 'There be light'? It is a part of the plan of creation, and not can prevent it. . . . I shall have to wait, but I—"

"Will wait a long time, Virgil. But we must not talk like this. Come—let us forget such things."

She put her spell on him, and he was a boy again. His hand they walked about, pretending that the acre island was miles and miles in extent. Time was a day-star shooting across the sky, and then a heavy sentence fell upon him. It was time for him to go. In the cane she stood with him when the canoe was moored. He held her hand, drawing her toward him but she took away her hand.

"No—no, you must not. . . . Quick, Virgil, you must go now. The sun is low."

CHAPTER XIII

IN the night, in that hour of self-reproach that comes to us all, Virgil awoke in a rage with himself. He had been dreaming, had seen himself infirm of purpose, without chance. Back to Highland Bruce he traced his ancestry, and was he the first of his race to prove degenerate, to trample upon the memory of his father, to loll in stupid love, to give his soul to a creature far beneath him in birth and schooling, a girl whose father had murdered! Out of bed he got, and bowed with the weight of shame, walked the uneven floor, for his slow steps were doddering.

"Caught in an instant, a fly in a speck of jelly, and have not been able to get free," he reproached himself. "Even Lillian Shottle, the slave of cards and dice, can see my weakness. I must laugh at me. But by the God in heaven it shall not be. This land there is no law. I bring my own law with me, my sword and a smile and a word of flattering love bade me put it aside. I let it slip from me. Now I must redeem myself."

He stood at the window. Gamecocks were crowing the dawn a courageous challenge to all the world. No, there would be no weakening now. The sweetish comedy had been played.

Swiftly he dressed himself, stole downstairs, out of the house, down to the river. There was no boat, but no matter, he would walk to Willow Head. Realizing that it was yet too early for the execution of his grim purpose, he halted at a wayside place, ate breakfast and waited for the sun. Then not in flurried haste but deliberate in strength he walked on to Willow Head, crossed over, found his neglected rope where in a hollow stump in backsliding weakness he had hidden it, buttoned it beneath his coat and strode down into the swamp.

It was a long way to his canoe near the Muscadine Isle, and then a long pull to Periwinkle House, but there was time enough. Stepho would not go away till Thursday. Ah, he would go away no more, for now on Tuesday he must settle with the spirit of Alfred Drace.

Mists hovered about, but the island was in a blaze of light. Silently the canoe slit the satin water. Silently he landed. Determined vengeance may pick its way as softly as eager love; and in the cane, sharper of whisper now that the weather was cool, he made not a sound. Out into the open he peered. No one within sight. On the bark of the live oak were the dead flowers of yesterday. There in the shade was the box that had served as table, once so prettily strewn with violets.

In spite of his vow of vengeance and his hatred of Stepho, these things caught at Drace's heart, shook his fixed purpose of action. For many minutes he waited—no sign of Stepho, of anyone. And then his blood leaped; for soft hands suddenly blinded him from behind, soft laughter bubbled over at his astonishment. And dark thoughts and dark purposes fled on the wind as he caught Nadine and hugged her close.

"Now for your punishment!" And he kissed her.

"Oh, you must not again."

.... Virgil, I cannot like you when you are rude. You must not!"

"I don't want you just to like me."

"You do not? Then I will try not to. Come and sit down, Virgil. You worked so hard for your kisses you must be tired. How did you guess?"

"Guess what?" he asked as she led him to the sofa and he sat gazing entranced as she captured and imprisoned her guerrilla bands of hair.

"That Father and Tony had gone hunting today. But they may be back at any time, Virgil. You must not stay."

"But I must stay; you hold me prisoner. I must stay till you love me as madly as I do you."

"As madly as you do me? That might not be much mad, Virgil. But why should I love you?"

"Because you are to be my wife. We are engaged."

"Are we? I did not know that. Why you not tell me sooner?"

"I did, and now you must know it."

"But I did not. Then I must be stupid, yes?"

"The whole universe is stupid if it denies it. The angels are stupid if they fail to see it."

"Oh, you must not talk like that. It is worse than swearing the big oath. And I am to be your wife, Mrs. Virgil? Then what we do? Go about and sing with the fiddle?"

"No, we go to the beautiful places of the earth and look upon them—together. We—"

"No, no, you must not think like that. You take my father by the wrist, and he hate you. And I do so wrong to see you. I am the sinner, but I believe that the blessed One, she ask for my forgiveness. No, Virgil, we can only play together and then It will live in the mind, our childhood, here. My father is not well all the time now, and I must be good to him. Only I must see you, sometimes. That is the only wrong I do him."

"For I—I love you I did not want to tell you, but I cannot keep it all the time down in my heart. I dream of you all of the night, and I kneel down and pray that you always

love me. There, I have told you much. And I kiss you, too. Now—you may stay for a little time, and then you must go."

Boy and girl they played, not from the book but from love's ever-varying text. In his canoe they paddled afar off where the lily-pads paved the surface of the pond. They landed on a knoll where was spread over persimmon saplings an arbor of muscadine; here an adventurous catbird had her nest of young. She cried and fluttered about in great alarm, but when she saw that they were not her enemies, that they caught grasshoppers to feed her brood, she sat high among the vines, calling her mate, the musician; and here he came, scared at first, but when she had explained to him, he sang his medley, ending with the cat-call whence comes his unpoetic name.

The sun had been speeding, and went behind a cloud. Fear seized Nadine, and taking Virgil's hand, she urged him toward the boat.

"My dear one, we must go now. The sun was jealous that we so happy and will go into the dark to pout. I will show you the near way for you to come again, the way I came when there was the fire. You can leave the canoe in the rushes and will need it only to cross over to the cane. But we must hurry now."

In the rushes opposite the island he hid his canoe, and then she conducted him along a narrow and sometimes treacherous trail. Coming to the foot-log, she halted.

"I must leave you here. But I stand for two minutes. The sun he will wink a few more times. I am so glad now to know that I will be your wife. And I am strong and can work."

"Lord bless you, but you want have to work."

His arms were about her, her cheek against his, and with happiness the world was glowing.

"Till Thursday!" he cried as he dipped his paddle.

"Till Thursday!" she echoed as she watched him go.

"Till Thursday!" muttered the sinister voice of old Stepho, who had approached softly through the undergrowth at the sound of voices, and had overheard their parting. But when he came to Periwinkle House, he gave no sign to Nadine that he had overheard—only talked of Monsieur Boyce and the fine dresses he would buy for her when she was his wife.

CHAPTER XIV

IT was long past noon when Drace reached the river.

The General had gone over into another parish to attend a stock sale, Tycie said; and when she had looked at Drace more closely, at his torn clothes, his muddy shoes, she sighed and sat down beside him where on the rustic bench he had dropped to rest before going to his room.

"Virgil," she said, "there is something troubling you. Now, you needn't tell me that it is business. I know what business is. I know all of its tricks; but I also know what love is and all of its tricks. Virgil, you are in love. Let me hope that it is not that Nina Spence. She isn't worthy of you; and besides, she doesn't belong to us. She is not of our world. Virgil, I am so sorry."

She put her hand on his arm, and he took it and affectionately kissed it.

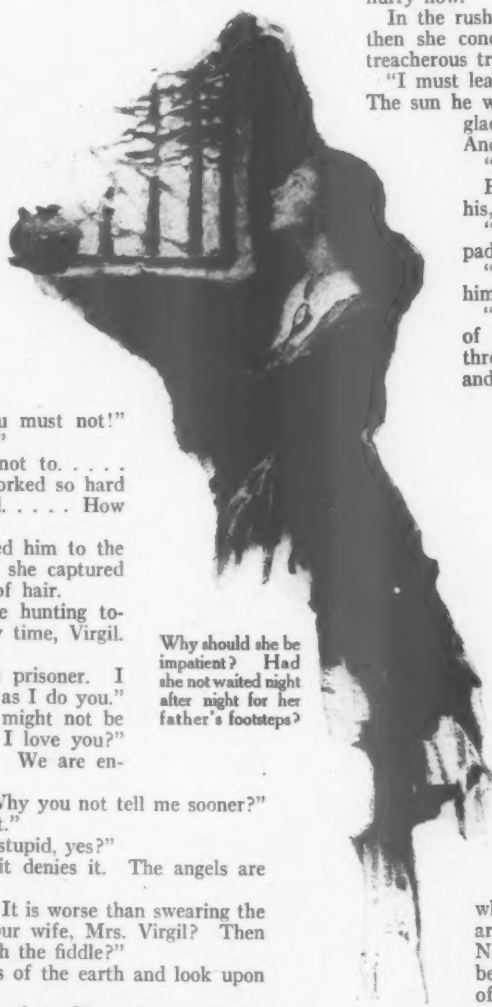
"Aunt Tycie, I never saw the girl you speak of. I am in the—the throes, you might say, and have been—was before I got here, but not with her."

"But is it with anyone I know?"

"You have seen her, I have heard."

"Oh, you must tell me. It shall be sacred with me. If you only knew how people tell me all their affairs of the heart. Even old Colonel Josh has told me. Now, why won't you?"

"I shall tell you, but I must put you (Continued on page 154)



Why should she be impatient? Had she not waited night after night for her father's footsteps?



"I've lived those moments through a thousand times—the stars, the velvet, purple sky—"

TRAILS TO SANTA FE

By WILLIAM DUDLEY PELLE

Illustrated by ROBERT E. JOHNSTON

ON the fifth day of last January, at a quarter before six in the afternoon, three men completed a certain legal task in a grubby lawyer's-office in the town of Taunton, Connecticut.

The table-top between them was strewn with memoranda, documents of sale and settlement, typed quitclaims and books of record. All three were mentally weary, but they had reached the last item, verified it, checked it off on a long list; and their afternoon's work—concluding a trusteeship of eighteen months—was ended. On the dusty red blotter before the senior of the three lay an open check-book.

"Well," he demanded, "shall we write the boy a check now, and wind it up, or shall we put it off until tomorrow?"

"Write it now," ordered the stout, red-faced man. "What's the use waiting?"

"Yes," echoed the tall, hatchet-faced third man, "get the check mailed and let's see the last of the whole bothersome business."

The senior trustee raised tired eyes to the clock, fumbled for his dangling eyeglasses and reached for an old-fashioned gold pen.

It was quiet in the room as he pressed back the thick stubs,

found the next consecutive blank check, dipped the gold pen in the ink and filled in the blank lines.

"Thirty-four thousand, five hundred and seventy-five dollars and fifteen cents!" he muttered. "And if the estate had amounted to a million, it could hardly have given us more trouble or work."

The check written, he signed his name, blotted it and passed the book across to the stout man. The latter inked his pen and added his signature likewise. The technicality was triplicated by the hatchet-faced third. Receiving the book back, the senior lawyer penned beneath the names:

"For the Estate of Sarah Porter MacKane."

Blotting the whole again, he ripped out the momentous slip of paper, adjusted the near-by check-protector, slid the document within its inky jaws and thumped the handle. Then he concluded:

"I'll inclose this in the envelope along with the letter and papers we dictated to Jane. I'll mail it on my way up to supper."

The three arose. The lean man gripped the sleeve-edge of his coat, preparatory to thrusting the arm into a heavy ulster.

"Only one thing about a job of this kind I regret," he declared, "—that after all the bother and work I can't see the legatee's face

when he opens the envelope and discovers what's inside. Why, I wonder, in this particular case, did old Sarah bind us to keep it all dark until the money was ready for remittance?"

The senior lawyer was busy collecting the papers. But he answered:

"She probably didn't want to put temptation in her nephew's path. Boys who know they have a chunk of money coming sometimes plan to do foolish things."

Ten minutes later all three had descended to the street and departed. The letter with its enclosures was properly posted, and the senior administrator climbed the hill toward home and supper. . . .

At the moment when the three trust officials were signing their names to that check,—to be exact, at ten minutes to six o'clock on the afternoon of January 5th, 1920,—two hundred miles to the northward, in a little Vermont factory office, young Malcolm E. MacKane was staring at a ghost!

He had been alone in his office for nearly fifty minutes. Immediately the five o'clock whistle had blown, his factory had been deserted with a rush—except for a night watchman down in the boiler-room who had just come on the job. At the end of those fifty minutes, the young manager had heard a step in the outer room.

He had assumed for a moment that one of the office force had returned for some personal belonging, forgotten in the rush of closing-time. The one who entered, however, was not an employee. Young MacKane had raised aching eyes—for he was ailing at the moment physically and mentally. He had called out interrogatively. Immediately a figure was outlined in the open doorway of his private office. He peered beyond the circle of illumination given by the green drop-lamp above his desk. And he saw the—

The apparition took the form of a woman. She wore a neat tartan trimmed with fur, and a long coat. About her shoulders were other furs matching the trimming on her hat, and she carried a similar muff. But of her dress the man took note afterward. His feverish eyes sought her face. Recognition came with a smash! From his lips broke a cry. He pulled himself to his feet.

For an instant the woman hesitated. Then she came silently across the floor toward him.

The desk separating them, she paused. The man repeated his cry of incredulity.

The girl's lips parted. Involuntarily she raised her arms, one wrist leather-weighted with the muff.

"Malcolm!" she whispered. It was as if she were uncertain how she would be received.

The man passed the back of a nervous hand across his forehead. Then he stumbled around the corner of the desk—put out a hand—touched her. Then in a sudden sweeping-away of all barriers his arms enveloped—crushed her. The fragrance of her hair, her lips, her breath, rioted his senses.

"Malcolm! Don't!" She laughed.

It had all transpired so suddenly that the man still could hardly credit the miracle, even after he had released her.

"Where did you come from—now?" he asked hoarsely.

"I got in on the five-twenty-three. I'm on my way to Montreal. I stopped off because I had to see you. After your last letter, I had to come!"

"Montreal?"

"An excuse—to come East, Malcolm dear. I couldn't stand it any longer—out there—alone. Don't you understand, Muggsy?" It was a name she had coined for him the summer before. "Out there" meant California.

"You! Here—here in Paris, Vermont!" His fingers gripped the desk-edge as though for balance. "I—can't—believe—it!"

"I've got just two hours, Muggsy. The train for Montreal leaves at seven-forty-five. Afterward, when I've seen my people there—accounted for myself—don't you understand?"

Silence.

"What's the matter, Malcolm dear? Are you ill?"

"Yes," he conceded with the same hoarseness, "I'm—ill." He tried to smile. The result was ghastly.

The girl dropped her muff on the desk and threw off her heavy neck-fur. He had groped his way back to his swivel chair and lowered his forehead upon his wrists. The woman pulled a chair beside him.

"What's the matter, Muggsy? Aren't you glad to see me? Tell me the truth!"

"Glad to see you?" He raised his head and seemed about to break out in an explosion of sophomoric confirmation. But he checked himself, and the woman saw it.

"Malcolm! Something's the matter. It's not just this surprise I've given you. Can't you tell me what it is?"

"Tonight, Aggie," he said, "I was planning to leave everything here—and go to you!"

For an instant a look, half fear, half puzzlement flashed into her eyes, then was gone. She drew her lower lip between her teeth.

"Leave everything here? Go to me?"

"I was planning to leave everything here and go to you! Don't you understand what I mean? I was planning to leave everything here, go to you, begin over again, and let everything here slide to—to hell!"

Again that look in her eyes.

"What a queer coincidence!" she exclaimed, lamely, as if she were not certain of her ground. "You mean you were planning to leave for California—tonight?"

"No, tonight I was only perfecting my plans to leave. I was meaning to start tomorrow night—at twelve-thirty-five. You see, if I'm going at all, I've—I've got to be out of here surely by Thursday morning."

His eye fell, and in that moment hers searched his face.

"I haven't been happy a day since I returned, Aggie, with the memory of what real happiness could be. Things have gone from bad to worse here, until now there's no way out. Always the memory of that evening up Alamitos Bay has been with me. Out there—three thousand miles away—happiness has called to me—and forgetfulness. I wanted other nights of stars like that—always. And so I had it all planned to go. I've got to wait until tomorrow afternoon, anyway—for several things. And yet Thursday morning will be too late." He swallowed perceptibly. Then he concluded: "And now, you're here!"

A silence fell between them, a silence broken only by the ticking of the old wall-clock in the outer office.

"But what if I am here? I've saved you the journey, haven't I?"

"Oh, don't you understand?" He gazed deep into her eyes.

"Agnes"—it was little more than a whisper—"this is a husk of a business! Going away—to you—meant starting all over. Now do you see what I'm trying to tell you?"

She looked about the office as though the substantial



Young Malcolm E. MacKane was staring at a ghost! "Malcolm," she whispered.

physical walls and furnishings contradicted his hopeless assertion.

"I've played my cards and lost," he went on. "I've tried my best to make this factory go—and failed. Day after tomorrow must come the inevitable crash—and I can't be here. I was going out to you,—start all over out there in some new line, and try to forget. Nobody would know me there. It would be a new chance, with you to—"

"You mean you're—"

"The company's bankrupt—yes," he cut in.

SHE gazed at him blankly.

"I'm sick—of everything! Seven years I've struggled to make things go. For seven years I've hunted capital, begged loans, fought for business, kept the organization together somehow. For seven years I've toiled and sweated and worked—overworked! I've met pay-rolls and found orders, always running just a bit behind and eating into my working capital, keeping the deficiency from penny-pinching stockholders, hoping the tide would turn. It hasn't turned, Agnes. Production has always fallen just a bit behind. Little leaks have drained my resources that I seemed powerless to help. The time has come when I can't hold out any longer; the result can't be worth the price. Always the inevitable Nemesis—the knowledge that sooner or later the crash must come. So—I was going away!"

She leaned forward quickly and touched his arm.

"Malcolm—have you done anything *criminal*?"

"No! Thank God—No!" She searched his face again with her deep-seeing eyes.

"Then haven't you the right to go away?" she asked.

"Technically yes; morally no," he replied.

"Morally no?"

"The stockholders!"

"What of them?"

"If you knew them as I do, you'd understand. There's Charley Pritchard: he put in two thousand dollars of his father's insurance,—borrowed it from his mother,—and he's got that mother, a wife and three babies dependent on him. There's old Amos Pulver the bookkeeper: he put in eighteen hundred. And there's Peter Whipple, cashier in a bank: he invested a whole lifetime of savings,—money he and his wife had laid dollar by dollar from each week's salary-check,—thinking this was a good business and ultimately he would have the opportunity to come into the office here and perhaps even head a business of his own. And there's the Wriston sisters, with their uncle's legacy invested in my stock. And the banks—they loaned me money largely on my industry and optimism." He sneered self-contemptuously.

"How much does it all total—this *moral* indebtedness?" the girl asked quietly.

"Over thirty thousand dollars."

"And if the plant closes down, how much would the assets pay?"

"Twenty cents on the dollar."

"And there's—absolutely no way out?"

He was a long time in answering. She had to repeat her question twice. And finally, not facing her, he told her.

"There's a frail hope, a terribly frail hope, so frail it's nonsense to talk about it at all. In desperation I went to New York last week. I laid a proposition before a man named Longshore. He heads a chain of twenty-five-cent stores all through the Middle West. Sometimes he finances small companies like mine and takes their entire output. I offered him my factory and business. This is a fifty-thousand-dollar corporation. I own twenty-eight thousand dollars' worth of the stock. The real money, however, is represented by the minority stockholders, Pulver, Pritchard, Whipple and the rest. I offered to turn all my stock over to Longshore if he'd finance me to the extent of twenty thousand, take all my product and pay the minority stockholders seven per cent regularly every year."

"And what about you?"

"I'd stay and work on a salary of five thousand a year." He did not see the faint smile that came into her eyes.

"What did he say?" she asked.

"He said he'd 'take it under advisement.' His board of directors were going to meet today—in New York this morning. He would lay the whole thing before them. If they acted favorably, I would get a letter not later than Wednesday, the sixth of January. If I had not so heard from him by that date, I would know he wasn't interested."

"Then why lose hope? There's still a chance."

"It's too slender, that chance. And there's no avoiding Preston's ugly ultimatum."

"Preston? Who's he? What ultimatum?"

"He's a local lawyer who's been instructed to file a petition for bankruptcy against me if I haven't paid a certain big bill by six o'clock tomorrow evening. He'll do it, Thursday morning, as soon as he can interview Judge Harmsworth."

He waited in the silence that followed. Would she appeal to him to wait and take the chance—or to stand by to the end? She did neither. Instead she pulled off both gloves slowly, buttoned the raglan coat and laid it aside. Then, still without speaking, she walked to the office window and stood looking out in the dark.

In the tensely the moment developed, the man cried out in protest:

"I want rest. I want peace. I want forgetfulness, happiness. All I've ever known is hard work and endless application—constantly making motions or concentrating on some problem that has taken its toll of a boy's priceless heritage—just boyhood. My trip to California last summer when I met you for the first time—even that was partly business, but it was the first great break from the grind I'd known for years. You don't understand. You can't understand. That evening when we rowed up Alameda Bay it was a fairy time!"

The girl still stood by the window, staring out into the darkness. Behind her the man picked up a pencil and began making aimless designs on a pad, while he ran on bitterly:

"I've lived those moments through a thousand times—the stars the velvet, purple sky—"

Suddenly, with a little squaring of her shoulders, as if she had made up her mind, the girl turned from the window. "What?" she asked.

"I want it all back again—and you. You were—you are—my Calypso, dear. Don't blame me, Aggie," he pleaded brokenly. "It has been so terrible since my return—calling, pleading, begging—and all I saw ahead was disaster. I couldn't stand it if I could stand it now. I can't! I can't!"

The girl bent above him, one hand resting on his bowed head. Over her eyes the lids drooped, and a faint tremor passed over her lithe body. It was as if she were summoning all her strength for a great, final effort. She looked down at him then, and in her gaze was a great sympathy and a greater pity. Then, bending lower and flinging one arm across his shoulders, she whispered:

"You called me Calypso! Yes—come with me, dear! to the Ionian Land is waiting—"

AT a quarter before eight that same evening an agent helped a somewhat disheveled woman aboard the Montreal express after it pulled into the Paris station from Boston. He had a few moments with her in the car before the heavy door continued on its way. Her parting words were:

"Grand Central station—Thursday afternoon—at five o'clock—near the information kiosk. After that—there'll be the happy meeting—together."

A pressure of hands, and they had parted.

The girl sat in one position in the seat, staring at her silhouette in the darkened car-window, until the train had nearly reached Sherbrooke. Then her whole figure shuddered as though she were emerging from a trance.

MAC KANE was late at his office the following morning—the morning of that last day. Old Pulver, the bookkeeper, came to him as soon as Mac was ready for business. The company check-book in his hand.

"We're getting frightfully short at the bank again, Mr. Mac Kane," he declared hesitantly.

"I know!" returned the manager with assumed indifference. "We'll fix it." When the old man had resumed his usual staring at the door. Poor old Pulver! He did more worrying over his eighteen hundred than all the rest of the stockholders lumped together. And yet, why not?

The young man's imagination ran morbidly riot as he visualized the probable events of tomorrow. The sheriff would probably appear sometime during the early forenoon, but Mac Kane would be missing. The young man pictured the stopping of the machinery, the cessation of all work in the front office, the quivering of the employees, who would buzz around the cashier's window like angry hornets because there was no money to settle their long-bean wage-accounts. He could see old Amos moving about in a daze, the white faces of many stockholders when the news reached them, the scandal that would spread over the town, the machinery in which the Mac Kane Woodenware Company would meet its end.

The president and general manager raised troubled eyes to

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"I want rest. I want peace. I want forgetfulness, happiness!"

gaze through the window beside his desk. Across the cluttered factory yard, and farther, across Water Street, his glance came to rest upon the billboard between Lem Batson's house and Walter Daley's blacksmith shop. A twelve-sheet poster pasted thereon announced the evening's attraction at the Olympic Motion-picture Theater: "William S. Hardy, in 'The Santa Fe Trail.'"

The big red letters of the title, the desert background, the mammoth lithographed "close-up" of the actor, the rough-and-ready girl on the horse by his side—these held MacKane's gaze.

"The Santa Fe Trail!" In another two or three days he—Malcolm MacKane—would be traveling the real Santa Fe Trail, for the kingdom of Heart's Desire—depleted bank-accounts, stockholder's troubles, business worries, forever behind him. And like the actor in the lithograph, beside him, too, would be a woman.

Bill Hardy's rôles had always held an irresistible appeal for young MacKane. If more vital events were not impending, he would be going to see that film, but now—He wrenched away his eyes.

The afternoon dragged to a close. At four o'clock a girl in Lawyer Preston's office called on the phone to learn whether he intended "doing anything" about that account.

"Tell Mr. Preston I'm waiting for an important letter on the five-twenty-three," was his reply. But he was not. He was really waiting for Bill Sheehan to appear with six hundred dollars, Bill's last payment on the motorcar MacKane had sold him. For not a penny of the company's cash was he taking on his flight.

Sure enough, as soon as he was released from work, Bill met his wife, came over to the MacKane plant and laid thirty twenty-dollar bank-notes on the young president's desk. He received his bill of sale in exchange.

MacKane pulled a deep breath when the transaction was completed and he was again alone in his office. Nothing hindered now. With two hundred more up in his room, he was financially free to catch the midnight train. Promptly at five o'clock he left the office.

When at five-twenty-three the afternoon mail-train came up the valley on schedule, Mac was in his room at his stepsister's home, packing the last few articles in his bag. The moral absconder did not care to eat a last meal with his sister and her family. He donned hat and overcoat, picked up his bag and a well-filled suitcase, and toted both of them to the station, where he left them in the care of the baggage-clerk.

It was twenty minutes before seven when he sauntered moodily down Main Street smoking an after-supper cigar. He had eaten in Ned Farrell's lunch-room. The front of the Olympic Movie Show was illuminated. People were going in and out of the post office, procuring their evening mail.

The evening mail! In the tension of leaving, Mac had almost forgotten about it. He entered the office lobby. His company box was Number 366, directly opposite the door. The young man drew a long breath before he looked in. The arrival of the Longshore letter, the contents of his post office box on this night, would change the entire course of all his days! He bent over, peering through the square of glass.

The box was empty!

Realizing that after all it really mattered little now, he moved around to the window where Jim Ruggles was selling stamps.

"Evening mail all distributed, Jim?"

"All up!" But as Mac turned away, the postal clerk called: "Hey! Wait a minute, Mac! Got a registered letter for you here, and I aint had time to shove the card in your box."

Mac's heart turned over. If Longshore forwarded important documents, he would of course send them by registered mail. A poignant excitement, MacKane signed the receipt-book and turned-card. He was handed a long envelope.

He steeled himself to look at its corner-card as he had steeled himself to look into his post-office box. Would it read: "547, Woolword Building, New York City?"

It did not. The corner-card was that of a firm of attorneys, Taunton, Connecticut. Smithsall & Son, he recalled, one of his largest creditors, had their factory in Taunton.

A dun! By registered mail! A notice before suit, sent them in order that his "Personal Receipt Desired" card might be shown as evidence that he had been duly notified.

Well, he had waited for the five-twenty-three mail. And what of it? Only another claim against the business. There was no saving it now. This dun was the last goad, driving him into this swiftly complicating business dilemma.

He turned his steps down toward the station—where he would wait alone for the midnight train. By the billboard he passed. Well, why not? It would help pass the time, and he'd always liked Bill Hardy. He retraced his steps until he came within the radiance of the theater's blazing entrance.

The second show of the evening was just starting, the "feature film," prefaced by a comedy. When the feature flickered on, the man was ready for the story it narrated. Would he not, in three days, be traveling down that trail himself—he and the one woman? Perhaps that is why the film had more of his attention this night than it might have had on any other evening. Then it would be merely pleasure. Now it was prophecy.

Bill Hardy, as a type, had always held a peculiar fascination for the young manager of the MacKane Woodenware Company. And the actor was in one of his happiest rôles this evening—a scout in the days of the 'Forty-niners. He had been elected to guide a wagon-train and a hundred pioneers through the multitudinous dangers of the old Southwest, along the Santa Fe Trail. The lives and destinies of his followers were completely in his care. And he was competent to command that trust. Of course there was a girl—

But why repeat the story of a current movie? The point is this: that one man in that little Vermont theater that night was moved by the portrayal as one in a hypnotic trance. For the time being he lived on the old Santa Fe trail of yesterday. He became Bill Hardy!

Ah, those were the days! The glory of those pioneers of an unconquerable race, that had pushed on through precipitous mountain ranges, over the death-floors of alkali valleys, and blistering, toll-taking deserts, advancing, ever advancing—it had departed. In place of such men were today, milk-and-water creatures—street-cars, automobiles and night lunch carts.

Came the great scene in the reel, the climax. The girl whom at first the hero would have abandoned the task that Fate had set him, had been captured by marauding Indians. The scout had one of two alternatives: He could desert the hundred souls depending upon him to lead them through safety to the end of the trail, and could go after the woman he loved better than he loved his life; or he could leave her to her fate—the fate of one in order that a hundred might reach the End of the Journey in safety. Banal and trite as the situation was, the moment was no less tense, the audience no less electrified. Yet every man, woman and child knew that could be but one outcome. With the flicker of a long-ago camp fire playing upon his manly face, the man fought out his battle with self and won.

He gave orders for the wagon-train to move—himself at the head. Fighting every inch of the (Continued on page 13)



Her parting words were: "Thursday afternoon at five o'clock. After that—there'll be happiness—together."

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HERE is the fourth story in the author's remarkable series chronicling the adventures that befell Peewee, child of the streets, on his great quest.

LAMPERT

By
WILLIAM MACHARG

Illustrated by
HENRY RALEIGH



"Where have you been?" Mrs. Markyn asked. . . . "You ran away?" "Yes'm."

PEEWEE, very clean as to his hands and face, and dressed uncomfortably in an almost new Sunday suit, waited apprehensively on the haircloth sofa in the small, formal parlor of the farmhouse. He watched nervously the section of sandy road which he could see between the curtains of the parlor window, and listened for the sounds of an arrival. The person whose expected coming produced this uneasiness in Peewee was Lawyer Sallett. His visit, taken in conjunction with the arraying of the boy in garments unaccustomed for a week-day, indicated an approaching change in the circumstances of his existence. Peewee, in his anxiety, assigned the necessity for this change to Matthew Beman.

No one had ever impressed Peewee like Matthew Beman. That old man—retired from the Board of Trade and living alone in this great Chicago house on the Lake Shore Drive, surrounded only by his servants—had, being over eighty, the authority for Peewee of an immense antiquity. The boy himself was ten; he had respect for Beman, and fear and admiration. The connection between them was attenuated; Beman was the grandfather of Peewee's father's wife.

He was, under the circumstances, however, no relation to Peewee. Before the boy's father had married Marion Beman, there had been another woman in his life. Peewee's mother had not told his father about Peewee; she herself had lost trace of the baby; Peewee had grown up upon the streets, selling newspapers, wearing comfortable clothes which formerly had belonged to someone else, not caring who his parents were. The boy's mother—dissolute and half-crazed—had found him just before she died, and had told him his father's name. She had not known—and therefore had not told him—anything about Beman. That amiable old man had, ten years before, opposed his granddaughter's marriage. It had taken place in spite of him, and he had never forgotten or forgiven his defeat. The scandal of Peewee's illegitimate existence was not yet known to his father's wife; but through his mother's death it had become known to Beman—who had wanted to make use of Peewee to separate the boy's father from his wife; and to prevent this Peewee's father had put him on this farm.

The approaching visit of his father's lawyer led Peewee to conclude that the farm had been judged not far enough away from Beman. They were, he decided, about to send him farther still from Chicago. His imagination shrank from picturing what a place still farther from the city would be like.

His soul abhorred the farmyard where chickens snuggled in the dust. Vegetables, he had known in theory, grew in the ground; he had picked them up sometimes, in happier days, from the gutters of South Water Street, without repugnance on his part. But when he saw them transferred directly from the earth to the table, without any intermediary barrels or crates, he refused to eat them. He felt the same about milk, which instead of presenting itself in cleanly bottles, he saw drawn from a cow. At night, when dark closed down upon the little farmhouse and the nearest light blinked half a mile away, he felt a lonesomeness which would not let him sleep. Looking at the vacant fields around the house, he thought of streets where high buildings stood closely side by side, of pavements thundering with vehicles, and of sidewalks crowded with people. He envied happier boys who sold newspapers among those people, listening to what they said to one another, boys who ate in alleys and slept in cellars. He did not dislike the elderly farmer and his wife who had charge of him. He hated, however, the short-legged blue overalls which

they made him wear, as much as he hated the dressed-up clothes they put on him on Sundays. He sat all day, when they would let him, watching for something interesting to pass along the road; but very few vehicles passed this house.

HE got up uneasily now as he heard the rumbling of a motor, and went to the window to look out. The motor had stopped before the house. Sallet—tall, thin and gray—got out; and the farmer's wife let him in. He stopped and looked into the parlor as he passed.

"Ready, young man?" he inquired.

"Yes sir," said Peewee unhappily.

"All right. Go out and get into the car."

Peewee halted in the hall to look after Sallet. The lawyer had gone on into the kitchen and was talking with the farmer there, and giving him money. This seemed to make it certain that Peewee's residence on the farm had terminated. As the boy descended the three steps in front of the house, the large red hen which he disliked more than any of the other chickens was throwing dust over her back beside the doorstep. He halted, considering a final vindictive assault upon the hen; but his spirits were too low, and he went on and got into the car—which, he observed, had been turned around to return in the direction it had come; but there was neither additional threat nor any promise in this. He did not dare to ask any questions of the driver, or of Sallet, when he came out and got into the car.

Peewee did not know where the road led in either direction, for he had been brought there in the night. Wagons, he had observed, were usually full when they went in the direction the motor now was going, and empty when they went the other. This seemed to predicate something important at their end of the road; it ended however, in a small, uninteresting village. They traversed a street flanked on each side by farm-wagons, and stopped at the railway depot. Sallet paid the driver and left Peewee on a settee in the waiting-room while he bought the tickets; the buying of tickets, the boy lugubriously decided, meant that they were going very far indeed. Directions were not known to him, and when the train finally thundered in, he could not tell the way it was going. Seated beside Sallet in the train, he looked out the window whenever they passed through villages, but looked about the car when there were only fields outside.

He perceived with interest, at the end of some two hours, that the villages were certainly getting closer together. He had, after looking at one of them, only time to take one or sometimes two bites of the sandwich with which Sallet had provided him, before they came to another. They passed presently a wide-spread factory with many little houses grouped about it, then a whole string of factories. He put his sandwich down upon the window-sill, and forgetting it stared out continuously. He began to tremble as he saw finally a street where children were playing between unbroken rows of red-brick houses. Other streets succeeded. They were unquestionably entering some large city, but what city Peewee could not yet tell.

The train rolled slowly into a long train-shed, and his recognition of it filled him with nostalgia. He saw, as they descended, a policeman whom he remembered having seen before. He wanted, as they passed through the station, to run away from Sallet out into the streets; but now the lawyer held him firmly by the hand. Peewee shook violently as he was put into a taxicab; the thronging faces of people, the roar of vehicles, the clang of street-car bells and the rumble of the elevated filled him with delight. He would have been perfectly happy, he thought, if the lawyer had let him get out and sit down on the edge of the sidewalk with his feet in the gutter; but Sallet, he knew, would not do that.

THE cab stopped before an office-building which he did not know, and they took an elevator to a corridor where there were several doors marked with Sallet's name. The lawyer unlocked the farthest of these doors and pushed Peewee ahead of him into a small, carpeted private office. His little body grew tense as he recognized his father in the man awaiting them within.

"Had there been anyone at the farm?" his father asked of Sallet.

"They'd noticed no one."

The question confirmed Peewee's idea regarding Beman. It was Beman who was seeking Peewee, and his father had sent the lawyer for him because he did not want himself to go to the farm, where the relation between them was unknown.

"Would you mind leaving us alone?" his father said to the lawyer.

Sallet went out into the next office and closed the door behind himself, while Peewee surveyed his father nervously.

Peewee did not know, having had no experience of relations, exactly how a boy ought to feel toward his father. Toward this tall, handsome, but not particularly forcible man whose name—Walter Wendell Markyn—he had heard for the first time when his dying mother gave it to him, he had no definite recognizable feeling. The mild curiosity which he had felt toward him at first had changed to fear when he had been made to understand that his existence was a threat against his father. Now he had lost that fear, and his chief interest in him was a relation to Mrs. Markyn.

Peewee had made the acquaintance of his father's young and beautiful wife without her knowing who he was. Exactly how it would destroy her happiness for her to learn about him he did not wholly clear to him, but the fact itself had been made plain to him, and he had determined that she should never know. He had been drawn to her as he never had to any other woman; she was in him incomprehensible longings, part pleasant and part painful. He wanted to be near her, to see her and hear her speak. He had become interested in him through his interest in her, and through her boy's handsome, appealing face, his lithe, straight little body, and the unchildlike sophistication which marked him as mother's son. He had told her that he did not know who his parents were, and she wanted to befriend him. She had found a temporary home for him with Beman. Then, because Beman had meant to tell her who he was, Peewee had run away.

Had Beman done something more, he wondered, which would have caused his father to send for him? His father, he thought, appeared intensely troubled.

"Sit down," the man directed.

PEEWEE drew himself up onto the nearest chair, and, looking curiously at his father's doubtful look.

"Have you ever loved anyone?" his father asked abruptly.

Peewee studied him in surprise.

"No sir," he said indignantly. Love, in his definition of it, was something soft; it connected itself vaguely in his mind with something he considered shameful. The streets had taught him to be hard and to deride soft things. He did not give any name to what he felt toward Mrs. Markyn, and did not know what these feelings meant.

His father paced up and down in front of him.

"I don't know how to approach you," he asserted. "You're incomprehensible to me as, I suppose, I am to you." He stopped and gazed down at Peewee. "Did you like it on the farm?"

"No sir," the boy answered promptly.

"But you would have stayed there?"

"Yes sir."

"Why?"

"So that she wouldn't find out who I am."

His father was staring queerly at him. "That's what I understood. You seem somehow to have got an appreciation that you were going to be a grief to Mrs. Markyn to learn about you. I don't know how you've come to realize that. I don't know how much more you're capable of understanding. You know a lot of things which you ought not to know, I imagine. The things you ought to know it's probable you don't."

What, Peewee wondered, was his father getting at? The man drew up a chair and sat down facing his son and took both hands in small hands, holding them in front of him. He seemed embarrassed and uncertain.

"Son, when you saw your mother before she died," he asked, "did she tell you her name?"

"No sir," said Peewee.

"You know it, though?"

"Yes sir—Helen Lampert." There could be, Peewee felt, no object to be gained by not being open with his father. He had changed her names," he offered.

"I know she changed her names. But Helen Lampert was her real one. Did she—" His father hesitated. "Did she speak to you though she had ever changed her name the way women sometimes do?"

The question was a little deep for Peewee. "No," he answered finally.

"Did she tell you she had not been married?"

"No sir."

"Did she say anything about marriage at all?"

"No sir." She had not been married. Peewee knew that his father knew it too. Why was his father asking this?

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"If you splash my granddaughter's name with mud, I'll ride you—I'll ride you both. If you don't know what that means, ask the boys on the Board of Trade about other men I've ridden."

"When she gave you my name, what did she say about me?" Peewee considered. "She said I wasn't to tell people the name. She said she and I were the only ones who knew that it was you." "She didn't speak as if she had been married to me?"

"No sir."

The answer seemed to satisfy his father. "Son," he said, "I think we've come, all of us, to what is called a show-down. Do you know what that means?"

"Yes sir," said Peewee. He knew the phrases of the streets.

"I've had to send for you to ask you to help me." He drew Peewee's hands together, holding them between his own. "Will you listen to me and try to understand?"

The boy nodded.

"I never loved your mother. That makes all this worse. I'd made a life for myself, after I had left her, as though she had never been a part of it. I'd married the woman I had always loved. Your mother had never told me about you; she'd kept that secret from me, just as my name had been kept from you until she sent for you and told you, the day she died. She'd kept it from all others too. Her own family, her father, did not know she had a son until then. But her father, Ben Lampert, long before had known about her and me. He put together what he'd known before and what he just had learned, and made me give him money to keep him from telling Mrs. Markyn. He came several times, and each time I gave him money, but not, he thought, enough. I couldn't give him all he asked. So finally I stopped."

Peewee understood about blackmail; the streets had taught him that. It wasn't Beman, then, who had made this present trouble. It appeared to have been Peewee's grandfather, Ben Lampert.



"I'll trade you clothes," Peewee offered.

"Now, Lampert has done something else," his father continued. "A shyster lawyer came to me two days ago and told me that unless I give them more money than I possibly can give, they're going to bring suit in court to prove that you're legitimate. Do you know what that means?"

"No sir," said Peewee.

"They claim your mother and I were married. They found evidence of that among the things left by your mother in her trunk."

Peewee felt inconsequential interest in the trunk. He recalled it, and the strong perfume that came from it, and the gorgeous, spotted dresses it had contained.

"Do you understand? Whatever they have by which to prove that that was so, they have made up by themselves. I shall have to show it is untrue in court, where it all will be public. To give them more money now is only to put all this off. Sooner or later I shall have to stop, and they will do it then."

"Tell her," Peewee offered, "that what they say isn't true."

"I'm afraid it will do no good to tell her that. Whatever they may fail to prove in court, they can at least prove that you are my son."

Peewee reflected. Something that Beman once had said to him recurred to him. "If a boy does you dirt," Beman had advised, "hit him in the eye."

"Why don't you do something to Lampert?" Peewee suggested.

"There's nothing effective I can do to Lampert. Son, I have decided that the time has come when I must tell Mrs. Markyn about you. If she must know, I would rather she learned it from me. You say she likes you."

"Yes sir," the boy agreed.

"I think she must. So, after I have told her, I want her to see you again. It may make it more possible for her to forgive me."

Peewee stared upward at him, startled. So this was why he had been brought here!

"Are you going to tell her now?" he asked uneasily.

"Not tonight. Tomorrow will be the time, I think. Sallet will take care of you until I need you. Do you understand?"

"Yes sir."

"You're sure?"

"Yes sir."

His father gazed down at him a moment as if to assure himself of Peewee's comprehension, then went to the door and called the lawyer. They talked inaudibly together and went out. Sallet came back.

"You'll have to wait here a little while," he said. "Then I'll look after you."

He closed the door on Peewee, and the boy sat staring gloomily. He was not directly thinking about what his father had said. He was thinking about Mrs. Markyn. When he saw her again, his

father would have told her all about him. He did not hope, as his father seemed to hope, that her liking for himself would make her forgive them both. People, he thought, did not forgive other people who had destroyed their happiness. Whatever her feelings toward his father might become, she would have only hate for Peewee. The last time he had seen her, she had talked long and kindly with him; she had put her cool, slim fingers against his cheek; finally, moved by his friendlessness, she impulsively had kissed him. He regretted that he had let them send him to the farm; if he had not done that, he might have seen her on those days. He wished that he could see her once more before she hated him.

The day was pleasant, and it was three o'clock in the afternoon. On pleasant days he had seen her often between three and four, walking up on the esplanade beside the children's bathing-beach. Would she walk there today? The desire to see her once more before she knew, was overwhelming in him.

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"You squealer!" growled the man. "You don't get out o' here alive!"

ONCE A THIEF—

By O. F. LEWIS

Illustrated by WILSON V. CHAMBERS

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on page 109)

KID MEADOWS, eighteen years and five months old, was going to the chair on Friday night, sometime after eleven o'clock. This was back in the year nineteen hundred and six.

The kid knew the various things that would happen on the last day. He'd seen Big Jack Sullivan go through the little door, with the remaining men of the death-house shouting: "Good-by, Jack!" The gray-bearded warden was coming frequently to the Kid's cell this last week, and the Kid preferred him infinitely to the chaplain. The warden said that lots of women were working for the Kid's reprieve, because of his youth. The Kid laughed hoarsely. "Not because I'm innocent, and never had a damned bit of a chance in life?"

With less than twenty-four hours still to go, the Kid began putting his house in order. The banjo, the best thing he had, was to go to Bill Donlan, the third man down the row of cells, and a fellow he'd never seen. He'd played over a hundred games of checkers with him, calling off the moves on the numbered black squares. Bill was forever cheerful. "You'll get your reprieve, Kid. Course you're innocent!" Bill was the only man in the world the Kid knew of, who believed in him.

Bill's case was before the court of appeals. "Swell chance I got!" remarked Bill cheerfully one day. "Course I croaked the son of a gun! Didn't he steal my wife and kids from me? Aint he dead? I'm satisfied. We all got to go sometime! But the

bell aint rung yet for you, Kid!" This he shouted along the corridor. The guards never let the prisoners see each other, except those whose cells faced. So the Kid had never seen Bill, except in a photograph passed along by the guard.

The Kid was writing a letter when the warden came into the death-house, after one in the morning, announcing the reprieve of the Kid. The seven men shouted, clattered their furniture, pounded on the tables in their cells. The Kid took it so quietly that the warden said: "Don't you care, Kid?" The Kid answered by crumpling up, slipping gently from the chair to the floor. Hurriedly the guard threw open the cell door and pulled at the collar and shirt of the lad. He was only a young boy, after all.

The warden picked up the sheets of paper on the floor. He went along the corridor and passed them in to Bill Donlan, to whom the first page was addressed. "From the Kid," said the warden.

They took the Kid out to the prison hospital, and the doctor diagnosed it as probably a general collapse. Big Bill Donlan sat in his cell, reading the Kid's letter over and over. Particularly did his eyes retrace several paragraphs:

"I didnt do it, honest, Bill. We were altogether in the loft when the shot was fired. I never had a chanct Bill all my life. Now I got to go without one neither.

"My father was a drunken bum, my mother died and I never saw her, and my older sister went on the town. They put me in

an orphan asylum, and then afterwards to the ref. You know what that was. When I came out, the other kids from the ref were waiting for me. They were good dips, and taut me.

"Bill, when I came out of the ref the second time, I didn't give a dam for no one, and I don't now. I hope you get your appeal, Bill. You're a white man, and you've done a lot for me in here. You'll be the last thing I'll think of Bill. You can learn my banjo easy and there is music that goes with it.

"Good by Bill. I've....."

The Kid seemed to have escaped the chair only to end his brief career in the prison hospital. But when the excruciating weeks of fevered illness were over, the warden stood by his bedside one afternoon and grasped the emaciated hand. "Kid, you're pardoned! You're innocent. They got a confession out of Boston Mike. You're free!"

The Kid gazed up at the warden out of cavernous eyes. His breath came pantingly.

"How's—how's Bill?"

The warden's eyes were averted, quickly, and he stepped back a bit.

The Kid lay, eyes staring at the ceiling, lips trembling, face contorted. Slowly, painfully, he raised himself upon one elbow. The other hand went into the air, fist clenched. Gradually it unclenched, and the long, thin fingers stretched out as if in supplication.

"God—damn the chair!"

"He left you a letter, Kid—and a smile—and the banjo!" said the warden gently.

The Kid stared with unseeing eyes at the wall. . . .

In May, 1920, Kid Meadows, then thirty-two years old, sat in Warden Cameron's office at the State prison, the night before he was to go out, after five years, three months and twenty-seven days served for burglary. He was smoking a cigar Cameron had given him.

The Kid shook his head with finality. "I'm going straight, as I said, Warden; but not because the one way's right and the other wrong. Society never did right to me from the start. I've told you all that. Were those rotten cells at the old prison right, where the water came out of the stone walls and soaked into your back, night after night, every winter? And the cooler, pitch dark—in for a month at a stretch? And the guards that used to throw you into the dungeons, and give you a pint of water every twenty-four hours, and then turn on the faucets running outside, when you knocked over your tin cup in the dark, reaching about for it? And when you got out, the bulls that wised the boss that you were an ex-con?"

The young warden took another tack. "Go straight this time, Kid, because I believe in you!"

"Now you said something!" replied the Kid. "There's other reasons, too. There's altogether too many low-down dogs among what the good people call criminals. They're worse than that! Why, Warden, there's men in here would sell their own mothers, or wives, or sisters, or daughters—straight! I've got my ideas of what honor is, but those fellows! Haven't I run the visiting teams' lockers here at the prison now for two years, through the baseball season? Did you ever hear of a cent's worth of watches or jewelry or stick-pins, anything being missing?"

The young warden rose and extended his hand. "It's eleven o'clock, Kid. I'm giving you a letter to a friend of mine that

wants a houseman. I believe in you—for keeps. Go to it, Kid—try it on!"

The Kid started to say something. "What is it, Kid?"

"Warden, did you ever hear of a Bill Donlan, who got the chair back in 1906?"

The warden shook his head. "Why?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing! Only you make me think of him!"

Some five months later, about three in the afternoon, the Kid opened softly the door of the parole-agent's room, in the office building at the Capitol. The parole-agent looked up with a smile, nodded to the Kid to seat himself in the chair on the other side of the desk, and went on writing for a moment. The Kid rested one elbow on the desk. He placed his forehead in the palm of his hand. When he finally looked up, the gray-haired parole-agent sat half tilted back in his office chair, looking at the Kid.

The Kid placed slowly upon the desk a long, black, high-calibered revolver, the pistol pointing at the parole-agent, and the bullets staring out from their cylindrical barrel.

"It's all off, Mr. Weston," said the Kid, his voice shaking a trifle. "I've come to tell you so. I owe you that much. You've been white. So's the warden. But the gang's got me. The other kind of life's too hard. I've tried it five months. It isn't the

hard work. It isn't that I can't earn money. You've banked over a hundred for me. But—well, I'm in on a big jewelry-shop job tonight. So I come to thank you, and to say—"

The Kid and the parole-agent talked together for an hour. At one time the parole-agent turned the lock on the door and slipped the key in his pocket. While the gun still lay between them, the parole-agent said: "Meadows, I don't want you to go till you've heard what I've got to say."

Quietly, conversationally, the parole-agent told of men after man he'd known who had come out and had nearly slipped back. Sometimes it was a woman who had saved him, sometimes plain ambition, sometimes the personal touch of a friend, or of the parole-agent—or the warden.

A letter slipped through the aperture in the door and fell into the basket. The parole-agent went over, got the letter, opened it and took from it a five-dollar bill. He read the inclosed letter and then handed it to the Kid. "Meadows," he said, "that's from a sixty-five year-old crook, with thirty-five years in prison behind him. He's working now, in a restaurant, at fifteen a week. Read what he says in the last paragraph."

The Kid read aloud: "Give this five-spot to some other fellow who needs it most right now. Tell him it's from an old-timer that wishes to God he'd had the chance to go straight in time—like the man who gets his will have."

"It's yours, Meadows! It don't make any difference how much money you've got in the bank. You're the man now that needs that five-spot most. Understand?"

A half-hour later the Kid climbed a rickety tenement-house stairway and rapped several times, irregularly, at a door. He entered and stood with his back to it. There were three men in the room.

"I'm off the job tonight, boys. Nothing doing! I've changed my mind—that's all!"

There were muttered exclamations. Two of the men sprang to their feet. The three men eyed the Kid. He drew his revolver from his pocket and threw it upon the cheap wooden table in the middle of the room.

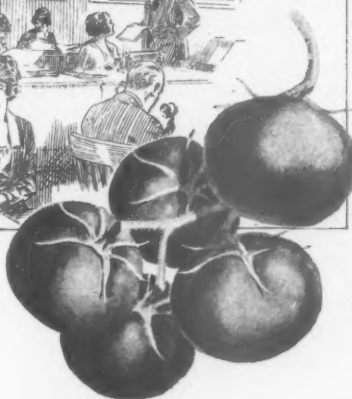
The men argued with him, expostulated, threatened—to all



"Let me go first," he said: "you are married—you got children."



"Here's the best tonic I know
Whenever you're tired and slow
First on your menu
Let Campbell's sustain you
And fill you with vigor and go."



These are times they need it

Outing days are on the wane. Your "business" folks, young and old, are settling into harness for the long hard pull. They must be well nourished. Especially the indoor workers.

Nature knows the tonic they need. Nature supplies the delicious red ripe tomatoes we use in Campbell's Tomato Soup.

And they are here at their best—the pure juice blended with choice butter, granulated sugar and other nutritious materials

A wonderful appetizer and regulator, the best form of health insurance, a supply of this tempting soup should be on your pantry shelf today.



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which the Kid shook his head. "I got a couple of friends that's stood by me, and I don't go back on 'em—that's all!"

A meaning glance, and a sneer, passed among the men. Suddenly one of the men placed a gun at the Kid's side. "You squealer!" growled the man. "You don't get out o' here alive!"

The Kid laughed in his face. "You yellow four-flusher, you haven't the nerve to drop me! What ails all you guys is that you don't dare pull this trick tonight without me. You're sore!" He taunted them, and laughed as he threw up the arm of the man whose revolver was pressing tight against his side. The Kid stepped to the middle of the room.

"I'm going, now. If there's to be any shooting, shoot me in the back, when I aint looking! Then I wont know who did it—see? And what I don't know I can't tell anyone. Only you haven't the nerve, anyway!!"

He turned, walked away from them slowly, not looking around. He opened the door, stood for an instant with his back fully exposed, and then shut the door behind him. He walked slowly down the stairs. Not until he reached the street did he hurry. He had promised the parole-agent he would come back as soon as he could. They were going out together to supper.

A first-class reference from his former employer got the Kid a houseman's job with the Leverings, who lavishly maintained a suburban home. In it were Mr. Levering, who was a broker; Mrs. Levering, lazy and arbitrary; an aged aunt who made constant demands on every person in the house; three children, several Pekinese and a number of servants.

The Kid liked Levering and endured his wife with a determined purpose to try out the job till he could make up his mind as to what he would do permanently. The children were all right enough, but had everything they wanted. The Kid kept remembering that as a kid he'd had nothing he wanted. The oldest Levering boy had his own car; the Kid hadn't even had a cart to drag around, when he was small.

Some six weeks after the Kid got his job, the three men from the tenement-house turned up, affecting to treat jovially the affair in the room on the third story, and called the gun-play at that time simply a joke. They walked with the Kid that night from the movie-show halfway to the Levering house, arguing, pleading, cajoling.

"Listen, you cheap skates!" exclaimed the Kid, turning upon them. "A good crook never trims his friend! Don't you know that much? You beat it out o' here! If you come near that house, you'll get yours! I mean it!" Whereupon the Kid walked briskly away.

He was not specially apprehensive of what they might do, except that they could job him with an anonymous letter, and he'd get fired, of course. That would be about their size. Or they'd tip off better men than they were as to the wealth in that house.

Nothing happened. The job was a good one, twenty a week and found, and easy hours. Levering seemed pleased with him. With the passing weeks, the Kid believed he'd scared the cheap crooks away for good.

Then one night he was roused from a heavy sleep by some one who shook his arm in the dark. He sprang out of bed. The voice of Levering came to him in a sharp whisper. "Keep quiet, John! There are burglars down on the first floor. Mrs. Levering is ill. I don't want to rouse anyone—yet. The burglar-alarm buzzed in my room. I've heard them moving around, downstairs. Are you game to go down with me?"

"Game?"

"Game!" repeated Levering. "I've had a letter about you, this last week. I looked you up—know of your record. I'll take

a chance on you, all right, John!" Into the hand of the Kid pressed a short, compact automatic pistol. "That is, if you're coming!"

The Kid was hurriedly drawing on his trousers. He swung gently but firmly, his boss. "Let me go first," he said; "I'm married—you got children."

They crept through the long hall of the second floor. No sound. They crept downstairs, the Kid in the lead. One light burned dimly in the wide entrance hall. Levering's hand was a tiny flash-lamp which he flashed once. "God's sake," whispered the Kid, "cut that out! In the dark they'd fire at it!"

The Kid was first into the dark dining room. Close to the wall he crouched, Levering by his side, both listening. They hear their own breathing—no other sound. Stealthily they crept to the sideboard and swept his hand slowly across it. "The silver's gone!" he whispered. He paused, figuring his next move.

In the basement, below the dining-room, there was a door. "Come!" said the Kid, sharply under his breath. "They're in there, going out through the basement. If we hurry we can beat them off."

Down the basement stairs crept the Kid and Levering. The Kid's hand went out and took from Levering the flash-lamp. "They're in the big room," whispered the Kid. "When you see inside the room, go flat on the floor. I'll be beside you. I'll fire till you see the flash of a gun. Then bore it! There's and perhaps three men working."

Levering lay prone upon the floor with his pistol pointed straight ahead. Suddenly there was a brilliant flash

of light from the room for an instant. The light went out immediately. The shot roared reverberatingly off the walls. Almost as instantly answering roar, and flash, from the front of him. Levering fired. A flash. He heard a shriek, away in a moan. Cold chills through him.

He felt himself tugged to the left. He understood. He was shifting their positions. He was the next shooting. Another flash and a roar. Levering felt a hot poker drawn across his back. Then there was silence. The pistol barked out, and there was again an answering flash. "You!" exclaimed the Kid.

Silence again. Levering wondered what was happening. He touched his stinging arm, and it was wet. He had been hit! He reached his hand out for the flash-lamp. Was he—dead? He had shaken in pain. He was gone! A thought swept over Levering. He was here in the basement of his own house, at the mercy of three men. Meadows had gone to the burglars! Levering was trapped! In an instant more the flash-lamp would be trained on him. Then—

Suddenly the sounds of a struggle in the pitch-dark came to him. "Don't fire!" Levering! I got him!" A voice came from a strange, husky, stricken voice. A table overturned. Glassware, crockery, crashed

floor. Levering instinctively rose to his feet and groped for the electric light. Shots rang out—one—two—three—four. A yell, a gasp, one final shot, and then quiet save for a low moan almost like a puppy's moan.

"The flash-lamp's somewhere on the floor, Mr. Levering!" "Thank God!" said Levering to himself. He found a pool of blood. The light flashed on. The houseman was staggering to his feet. In a pool of blood lay a crumpled form, the face a mass of



"Don't fire,
Mr. Levering!
I got him!"



Your complexion tells a story to the world

HOW fearlessly, how confidently, the girl with a fresh, soft, lovely skin meets the eyes of the world! Nothing to conceal! For almost always a clear, radiant complexion is an indication of a buoyant, well poised nature, healthful living and fastidious habits.

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Don't let your skin tell a story of neglect or thoughtless habits. Even if through the wrong kind of treatment your complexion has lost the smoothness and freshness it should have, you can give it back the color and clearness that make other girls' complexions so attractive.

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Every night with warm water work up a heavy lather of Woodbury's Facial Soap in your hands. Apply it to your face and rub it into the pores thoroughly—always with an upward and outward motion. Rinse with warm water, then with cold—the colder the better. If possible, rub your face for thirty seconds with a piece of ice.

Use this treatment regularly every night, and see what an improvement it gradually makes in your appearance—how much firmer and drier your skin becomes under this care.

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This is only one of the famous Woodbury treatments for improving the skin. Get the booklet of treatments that is wrapped around every cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap and

use the treatment for your individual type of skin.

Woodbury's Facial Soap is sold at all drug stores and toilet goods counters in the United States and Canada. Get a cake today—begin your treatment tonight. A 25-cent cake lasts for a month or six weeks of any treatment, or for general cleansing use.

"Your treatment for one week"

Send 25 cents for a dainty miniature set of Woodbury's skin preparations containing your complete Woodbury treatment for one week.

You will find, first the little booklet, "A Skin You Love to Touch," then a trial-size cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap—enough for seven nights of any treatment; a sample tube of the new Woodbury's Facial Cream; and samples of Woodbury's Cold Cream and Facial Powder. Write today for this special new Woodbury outfit. Address The Andrew Jergens Co., 1709 Spring Grove Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio.

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"The last one got him for fair," panted the Kid, standing over the body. "Let's look at the other one!"

He went over to the form, prostrate on its face, arms extended. A woman's shriek rang out from the floor above. Levering could hear agonized voices—women's and men's. The Kid turned the silent form over. "I thought so!" he said.

From his own right hand dripped blood. He examined it coolly. "Only scratched!" he remarked. Then he caught sight of Levering, staggering dizzily. From the man's left arm the blood was flowing profusely. The Kid peeled off the man's shirt, tore it into several pieces, and bound them tightly above the nasty wound. The other menservants rushed into the basement room.

TWO weeks later Levering called the houseman into his own private den. Levering's arm was in a sling. "Meadows," he said, "you're one of the whitest men I ever had the good fortune to know. I'd rather have you at my side in a pinch than anyone I—"

His eyes caught the look in the houseman's eyes. Levering stopped. He felt little beads of perspiration gathering on his forehead.

The Kid spoke. "I know what you're going to—got to say, sir. Mrs. Levering and the—old lady wont stand for an ex-con being around, with the children here, and growing up—and the silver and jewelry, I suppose, too." The Kid tried to speak with calmness, but his voice trembled.

"Meadows, women are—different from men—some women. They recognize your bravery, and they want me to—to— If there's any possible good position I can help you to—I've got mining interests—and you're taken care of anyway for a year, Meadows. I'll see to that. This check—"

The Kid pitied the man before him, in a way. The Kid shook his head at the outstretched check. "My things are packed, sir. I'll be out of the house in fifteen minutes. All I want's my wages.

I got the story from the maid this afternoon. She's been throwing it up at me, coming in here under false pretenses, and taking honest peoples' jobs. I haven't anything against you, sir. You're a brave man, sir—but you've got children—that—that have all they want! All I want's my wages. No job! I couldn't take it, after all that's—happened!"

Levering held out his hand. The Kid took it. "Any time, anywhere, Meadows, when you change your mind—whatever I can do!"

"You're another man like Bill Donlan," said the Kid to Levering. There didn't seem to be anything more to say. The Kid noticed how clammy the hand of Levering was. "I'm leaving now, sir," said the Kid.

From the parole-agent in the big city the Kid got the next day the hundred dollars that had been banked for him. That, together with the hundred and seventy-five from Levering, his wages, made nearly three hundred. What the Kid would do he didn't yet know. One thing he did know: once a crook, always a crook! Everywhere in the world there would be Mrs. Leverings, and old aunts that thought each con was a murderer, without honor.

That night, in the big city, the Kid was panhandled by an old beggar. He recognized him—Chicago Tom, a first-grade dip in his time, now a bum, in and out of county jails. However—

The Kid took him to a restaurant, fed him up, took him to his room and listened to the old man's story of his wasted life. It was certainly a tough sight to see an old fool bawl the way Chicago Tom did. The Kid gave him five dollars and told him he could flop on the sofa for the night.

The Kid woke late, in the morning. Old Tom was gone—and with him the Kid's bank-roll, clothes, suitcase, shoes, everything that was portable. Only the filthy garments of the old man were strewn about the room. The Kid drew on the nondescript clothing, and went down-stairs.

On the way to a cheap restaurant he

bethought himself that he had no money. Carefully he went through the pockets of the dirty garments. In one he found the five-dollar bill that he'd given the panhandler the night before. He bought a paper on the way to the restaurant.

Down at the foot of the last column of the second page was a brief item two paragraphs long. Red Miller had been released on parole, the day before, from the State prison. Red Miller, according to the reporter, was reputed one of the cleverest burglars in the East.

The Kid's nose went into the air, as though sniffing the scent of battle. He knew where he could find Red. Red had a good-sized wad planted from his last turn—the one they got him for; they hadn't been able to dig up the wad. Five hundred wouldn't mean much to Red.

The Kid ate breakfast with relish, and with a set smile on his lips.

THE old parole-agent sat in his office at the Capitol, his chair half tilted back, his eyes half closed, thinking. Through the aperture in the door dropped a letter—a letter from the Kid, which the parole-agent read twice over:

They gave me life. I'll be over fifty when I come out. The job I did, snatching that paymaster's bag in full daylight, was all bunk. Of course they'd get me. I meant them to. I expected to get life, being what they call an habitual criminal, with four convictions for felony.

I promised you and the warden to go straight. That's why I'm back here. This is the only place people will let me go straight. You remember the Leverings?

Please come and see me sometime. I got my old job in the locker-house back.

The parole officer had difficulty in understanding. Finally it was time to go home. He shook his head. Here was another failure! Well, it took something to keep up one's courage in this kind of work! He rose, took the yellow sheets of paper and dropped them slowly, regretfully, into the wastebasket.

"Better luck next time!" he murmured as he locked the door.

YOU NEVER KNOW YOUR WIFE

(Continued from page 42)

terms secured by your early action, as I have received \$50,000 for a similar grant of the British rights. With kind regards—"

"Ten thousand dollars!" thought Samson bitterly. "He might as well have asked for ten million."

The next letter was from a correspondent in Manila and enclosed a long order for goods. It began:

Dear Sirs:

In anticipation of an early end of the war, we wish you would ship us the following, via Panama Canal. We enclose one letter of credit—

Samson, breathing quickly, turned to the letter of credit. It was for \$11,420.

"If I could only get hold of that money and use it a few weeks, without actually shipping the goods," he thought, "I could get the axle business and pull through

yet. But what if something happened and I couldn't put the money back?"

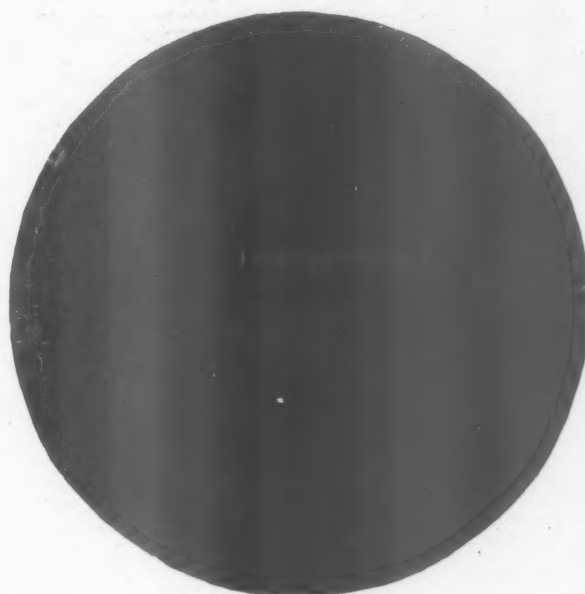
Old Man Caution whispered to him: "You'd get ten years in Sing Sing—cashing a commercial letter of credit without shipping the goods." But Young Man Take-A-Chance shouted: "Don't listen to that old fool! How in the name of heaven could anything happen? And isn't that just the sort of thing—taking what you need—that De Vincent teaches?"

BUT still Samson didn't fall, although it might be said that he teetered—old Abner dying hard in him. And when a peddler came in a few minutes later, wistful-eyed, shabby and fat, and Samson said to himself, "That's the way I shall look in a few years—" even then he didn't fall. And when he crossed Broad-

way on his way home and saw more successful men than himself riding uptown in their motorcars, he didn't fall. And when standing in the subway he read such headlines as "Socialists Demand Cancellation of National Debts" and "Bolshevist Emissaries Reach New York," even then he didn't fall. But when he left the subway and walked over to Riverside Drive, he saw a sight there which had much the same effect upon him as an electric spark has upon a helpless, hesitating mixture of gasoline and air.

"Yes; and why not?" he suddenly demanded of himself. "Why shouldn't I use that money for a few weeks if it's going to help me? If they are going to rewrite the Ten Commandments and the New Testament, I might as well be one of the first on the job. I'm sick of shilly-

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A Wife Too Many

Into the hotel lobby walked a beautiful woman and a distinguished man. Little indeed did the gay and gallant crowd know that around these heads there flew stories of terror—of murder—and treason—that on their entrance half a dozen detectives sprang up from different parts of the place.

Because of them the lights of the War Department in Washington blazed far into the night. About their fate was wound the tragedy of a broken marriage, of a fortune lost, of a nation betrayed. It is a wonderful story with the kind of mystery that you will sit up nights trying to fathom. It is just one of the stories fashioned by that master of mystery

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NAME.....
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shallying around and getting nowhere! I'm sick of being everybody's fool!"

He felt a new strength in his knees and shoulders—could almost feel himself expand to heroic proportions. From that time forward, he too would be one of those splendid heroes who commanded time and circumstance with such sublime assurance. He too would fight great odds and triumph, entering dangerous places and emerging unscathed. "Yes, damn you, it is I, Richard Carington!"

In front of the apartment-house where he lived, a glistening car had stopped. The Professor and De Vincent had stepped out, and now the latter was helping Helen to descend.

"De Vincent's new machine," thought Samson. "Helen said he was going to get one."

As his wife stepped out upon the sidewalk, Samson noticed with mingled pride and jealousy how every passing man's eye was on her. She saw her husband approaching and waited for him, meanwhile chatting gayly with her father and De Vincent, who were evidently about to drive away in the car together.

"She's got a new dress," thought Samson as he hurried forward, and with that knowledge which only comes with marriage, he couldn't help adding—full as he was with his great resolve: "That's the reason she's taking her time. She wants everybody to see it."

After the car had been admired, De Vincent and the Professor drove away while Samson and Helen went to their apartment above. As Helen led the way, she hummed an air which she had heard that afternoon; and Samson, glorying in his new-found purpose, followed blindly after, as man has always followed that woman who comes into his life sooner or later—that woman who will lead him up to the gates of heaven, or down to you-know-where.

"DAD and Stanley have gone over to Paterson," said Helen as she stood before the dresser, taking off her hat. "Stanley wanted to address a meeting." "And show off his car," said Samson in the next room.

There was a new tone in his voice which Helen seemed to catch. At any rate she glanced over her shoulder, and then returned to her own pretty reflection. With a last pat at her hair she left the dresser and set sail for Samson.

"What do you think of my new dress?" she asked, slowly turning around, and then as slowly smiling at him.

"A beauty—and a beauty's wearing it," he answered, his voice shaking a little as it always did when she smiled at him like that.

"You think so?" she asked; and perching herself on his knee, she said: "Samson, why can't we have a car too? I don't mean a touring car like Stanley's," she hastily added, "but a nice, big glass one, with a chauffeur to run it—so we could go out into the country whenever we felt like it, and not be cooped up so much here in New York."

He was about to speak when she stopped him by pressing her cheek against his lips.

"No; listen," she said. "Now I've

started begging, I'm going right on. I want a car"—she raised one finger—"and a chauffeur"—she raised another—"and a place to go out in the country somewhere, with a big high wall around it, and trees to swing from, and grass to walk in, and a brook with little fish in it. Isn't that the craziest notion ever? And listen, dear: I know it sounds awful to say it, but isn't there some way we could get behind that million dollars which you are going to make some day, and hurry it up a little?"

"It's coming," he told her, his voice sounding muffled. "It won't be long now."

SHE looked at him attentively, turning his head a little to inspect him the better.

"You really mean it?" she whispered in delight.

"I'll have the axle-patent now in a few days," he nodded; "and with any sort of luck, you'll soon be able to have those things you've asked for—yes, and everything else you can think of!"

"Soon, you said?"

"It won't be long."

"Before—another six months or over?"

"Yes, before then. And listen, dear," he added, carried away by his own earnestness: "If anything happens to me, you hang on to that axle business. I'll write you full instructions what to do."

"Why, Samson," she exclaimed, her eyes round with astonishment, "what do you mean?"

"Nothing—nothing," he said, and could have bitten his tongue off. "Only accidents happen, you know. People get run over, and things like that."

But still she looked at him with rounded eyes.

"It's so funny," she said, "to hear you talk so. You've never been afraid of accidents before—have you?"

"No; and I've never had a million dollars so close before."

"Perhaps that's it," she said, as much to herself as to him; but if you had been there, I think you would have caught the lingering doubt in her voice.

"Is it going to take a dreadful lot of money, dear—this new business?" she asked.

"Not a great deal. Ten thousand dollars down—and then I shall make an arrangement with some big manufacturer to put them on the market and either pay me a royalty or a percentage on each one sold."

"I see," said Helen, though truth to tell, much of this was Greek to her. But something happened the next morning which was plain enough.

"I called you up about that check which you gave me last week," her dressmaker telephoned. "I didn't deposit it until the day before yesterday, and my bank has just told me that payment has been stopped. Can you tell me the reason?"

"No, I can't," said Helen. "But I'll find out and let you know."

Somehow—she herself couldn't have told you why—this vaguely fitted in with her fears of the night before.

"I know what I'll do," she thought.

How to keep your nails fashionably manicured



This season's fashions are built to display the hands

B RILLIANT fans to permit a graceful motion of a perfect hand. Sleeveless gowns that lead the eye down the slender arm to rest on the finger tips. Beads with which pink finger tips may toy.

Never before have hands been so conspicuous, never before have women given so much thought to their care.

The chief beauty of the hands is the nails. The cuticle must be slender, even, firm. It is unpardonable this year not to have perfectly kept nails and cuticle. Fortunately, it is no longer hard to keep the nails lovely.

Fifteen or twenty minutes given regularly each week to this simple, scientific method of caring for your nails will keep them always exquisite.

There is no need for the slow, ruinous cutting of the cuticle. Learn to manicure the safe way. Cutting the cuticle leaves a ragged, irregular edge. The more you cut it, the more rapidly the cuticle grows—the tougher and more uneven it becomes.

But with Cutex, the safe cuticle remover, you can rid yourself of superfluous cuticle without cutting.

How to give yourself a perfect manicure

First, file your nails to the desired length and shape. Smooth away any roughness with the emery board.

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For snowy nail tips, apply a little Cutex Nail White underneath the nails. To finish your manicure, use Cutex Nail Polish.

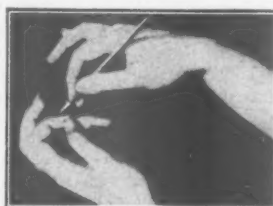
If you wish to keep your cuticle soft and pliable, so that you do not need to manicure as often, apply Cutex Cold Cream at night, on retiring.

Cutex is on sale at drug and department stores in the United States and Canada. Cutex Cuticle Remover, Nail White, Nail Polish and Cold Cream are each 35c. The Cuticle Remover comes also in 65c sizes.

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Mail the coupon below with 20 cents and we will send you a Cutex Introductory Manicure Set, large enough to give you at least six manicures. Send for it today. Address Northam Warren, 114 West 17th Street, New York City.

If you live in Canada, address Northam Warren, Dept. 609, 200 Mountain St., Montreal.



Gently push back the cuticle with an orange stick wrapped with cotton and moistened with Cutex. Then wash the hands.

For snow-white nail tips apply a little Cutex Nail White underneath each nail. Finish your manicure with Cutex Nail Polish.



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(1002)

"I'll run downtown to see him, and then we can have lunch together."

It was eleven o'clock when she started out—as gay and as pretty a picture as you would have found in all New York that day. At half past two she returned—the same Helen who had started out a few hours before, but oh, how changed!

She had traced Samson from his old offices in the Foreign Exchange Building to the desk-room which he was now occupying in the dingy old Perry Building. There she had missed him, but the card on the door, "Gone to Lunch—Back at One," was unmistakably in his writing. At the corner of Broadway she had caught sight of the marble façade of the Exporters' National Bank, and acting upon impulse, she had gone in to inquire why payment had been stopped on the check.

It was six o'clock when Samson came home, his eyes brighter than Helen had ever seen them, an unaccustomed spot of color on each of his cheeks. Old Man Caution had been right. When you start to use some one's else money,—when you start to tear up the Ten Commandments and rewrite the New Testament,—every step you take leads you deeper into the swamp. Samson hadn't planned every detail yet, but he had gone far enough to know where the road was taking him—to know that if his foot slipped by the least fraction of an inch, he would never be able to get out of the mire.

"I won't bother him before dinner," thought Helen, her heart sinking at the prospect. "There's plenty of time."

It was one of their company nights. De Vincent came for dinner, and later a number of friends dropped in for conversation and cards. Helen served refreshments, and as a sort of pièce de résistance, De Vincent lighted a Japanese incense-holder and read his latest poem: "Oh, That Love Could Be Untrammelled!"

Always before, Samson had listened in silence, but this night when the applause was finished and Helen had gone into the kitchen for more sandwiches, he had a few slight words of criticism to offer.

"Don't you think," he asked the author, "that a lot of modern poetry is just plain smut?"

"Some minds might find it so," said De Vincent in stiff surprise.

Samson's reply came quick as a blow. "My mind finds it so," he said. "That thing which you've just read, for instance, that free-love business—instead of burning a joss stick, you ought to burn a fumigating candle and sprinkle chloride around the premises. If you'll pardon me, I'll open the windows."

When Helen returned to the room, she felt the tension in the atmosphere and saw the color growing on Samson's cheeks.

"What was the matter, dear?" she asked after the guests had gone.

"Oh, nothing—nothing." He spoke and gestured in a large manner, as Richard Carrington might have done, but his next remark was Abnerian, pure and simple.

"I think I'll go to bed," he said. "I'm tired."

HIS room was on the court, and when he put the light out, it was so dark that he could hardly make out where the window was. For a long time he lay awake, busy with the plans that had burned in his mind all day; but he went to sleep at last. His next conscious act was to wake with a start—to find that Helen had stolen in and was lying by his side in the dark, crying and trying to hide it, as women have tried to hide their tears from immemorial ages.

"What's the matter?" he whispered in alarm. "Don't you feel well?"

"I—feel all right," she sobbed. "Only—I'm frightened."

"Frightened at what?" he asked. "Wait a minute. I'll put the light on."

"No. Don't—don't. I'll be all right again soon."

"But what frightened you?"

"I—don't know. I think it's what you said last night. If anything happens to you—Oh, Sammy, dear, I'm afraid. What—what could happen to you?"

"Nothing!" he quickly replied. "It was a slip of the tongue: that's all."

"And you never told me—about things going wrong downtown."

"What do you mean—'things going wrong downtown?'"

"I was down there to see you—but you were out to lunch. My dressmaker telephoned me her check had been stopped—and I thought I ought to let you know."

Samson felt his cheek burn against the pillow, and blessed the darkness that covered him.

"You've had a bad time down there; haven't you?" she whispered.

"Not very pleasant," he answered at last.

"And you never told me!"

"I didn't want to worry you. It was the war."

"Worry me! If you only knew! It wouldn't have worried me half as much as this. And you've been so different yesterday and today and—and—oh, Sammy, I'm 'fraid—I'm 'fraid."

Her sobs frightened him.

"Wait," he said. "I'll get you a glass of water."

"No; don't. Don't go." Her arms were around him then, and she was crying as though her heart would break, her wet cheek pressed against his, even as she had cried and held him so many years before when he was about to leave the farm to make his fortune in that distant city which was now their home.

After a while she was able to speak again. "Do you—do you love me?" she asked him.

His answer left her in no doubt of that. "And will you do something to please me?"

"There's nothing I wouldn't do!"

"Then let's leave all this—and go back to the farm for a time. This—oh, I don't know—it's beginning to taste bitter, and I don't want to be rich—only happy. Don't you?"

"If you were only happy," he told her from the bottom of his heart, "I wouldn't want anything else in the world."

"There. Then it's settled. And that axle-business and everything else—we'll just forget it ever happened." She drew



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Then one day, she came. She was a Parisienne—a supper-girl of Maxim's, married to a professional wrestler.

Everett forgot he was a Harvard graduate. He forgot the Boston girl he was engaged to.

And she—but she too was in the grip of a savage, relentless fate, that makes this story of life as it is, by

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(First Uniform Edition)

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a deep breath. "Oh, I do feel better now," she said. "And in the morning we'll both start packing and get away just as soon as we can."

AT breakfast next morning they discussed ways and means. With the little ready money they had, Samson soon saw that they owed much more than they could pay. As nearly always happens, the plan which had seemed clear to him in the dark now became obscure in the light.

For some reason which he couldn't understand, Helen was sure that they could manage somehow.

"I must run down first and see the dressmaker, though," she said. "I won't be long. I ordered a new dress the other day, and if she hasn't started it, I'll stop her."

Before she left, she kissed him with a tenderness that she had never shown before, and it struck Samson that although they had known each other since she had been a baby, they were still strangers in many things.

"I wonder if any man ever really knows his wife—or understands her," he asked himself. "Take last night, for instance, and the night before: I was trying to think of some way to get that ten thousand dollars—and what was she thinking of? I didn't know her thoughts any more than she knew mine."

His wonder at this was overwhelmed by a warmer feeling.

"What a queen she is!" he thought. "Perhaps that's what women are for—to keep things straight. If I hadn't been such a fool in the first place! But all the same," he added, his fears returning, "it isn't over yet. We've got to get things cleared up before we can get away."

The ringing of the telephone-bell broke in upon his thoughts.

"Mr. De Vincent calling."

Samson reflected for a moment, and then he nodded as though he might have been saying to himself: "Here is one thing, at least, that can be cleared up."

"Send him up," he said.

If you had been there while Samson was waiting for the visitor, you might have noticed that he was breathing deeply, perhaps as Richard Carrington might have done—for he had an instinctive feeling that one of the great moments of his life was near at hand, to be handled with such sublime assurance as might come to him. The door-bell rang.

"Come!" cried Samson, and drew a deeper breath than ever.

Footsteps approached down the long hall, and presently De Vincent appeared.

"Good morning," said Samson.

"Good morning," said the other stiffly.

"How's our little Bolshevik today? Broadway going to run blood this afternoon?"

De Vincent stared at him. "What do you mean?" he asked.

"What do you think I mean?"

"Not being an alienist, I couldn't tell you."

Samson felt that the sword-play of repartee might turn against him, and he promptly picked up the same honest old club that Abner would have chosen.

"No," he said, "you're not an alienist."

"You're a crook."

"Who's a crook!"

"You're a crook! And you made me one too—you and your teachings. And now let me tell you something: the next time you come in the doorway, you'll go out a lot quicker than you came in."

"Who'll make me?"

"I will!"

"Do you think you could?"

"I'll show you, if you like."

Samson stepped closer and pointed to the door.

"Get out!" he said.

As De Vincent stepped backward, his walking stick chanced to rap Samson on the side of his knee. The next moment Samson's fist had doubled into a formidable missile and had started to travel. It certainly struck a beautiful blow—that Richard Carrington might well have been proud of, a blow with steam behind it and some place to go. De Vincent went down, his head striking the floor with a hollow sound, and when he found himself in a sitting position, he was concerned in holding his handkerchief to his nose and counting his teeth with the tip of his tongue to think of further combat.

"Get up!" said Samson sternly.

It was another Anthony speaking. Old Gooseberry the day after the temptation—and there was something in his voice which quickly brought De Vincent to his feet.

"And now get out!"

At the end of the hall De Vincent found his voice.

"I could have you arrested for this," he called out over his shoulder.

Samson took a quick step toward him, but the door slammed, and De Vincent had gone.

WHEN Helen returned a few minutes later, a puzzling thought had evidently been running through her mind.

"Sammy," she said, "how on earth do you ever expect to get ten thousand dollars to pay for the axle, when you couldn't draw a dollar out of the bank?"

"I don't know," he uneasily answered. "That's what was worrying me."

They looked at each other, and in the depths of his eyes Helen dimly divined the road to Avernus which he had been traveling. "And all for me," she thought with a quickening sense of love for that troubled-looking old boy who was standing before her.

"Do you really think it's worth ten thousand dollars?" she asked.

"Worth it?" he asked in a long voice. "Why, I could turn right around and sell it for fifty thousand tomorrow."

"You're sure?"

"As sure as I am that I love you!"

"Then wait a moment, dear."

She ran to her room and came back with the miniature steel trunk, about as large as a good-sized building block, which served her as jewel-case.

"Now!" she said. "How much do you pay for this pearl necklace?"

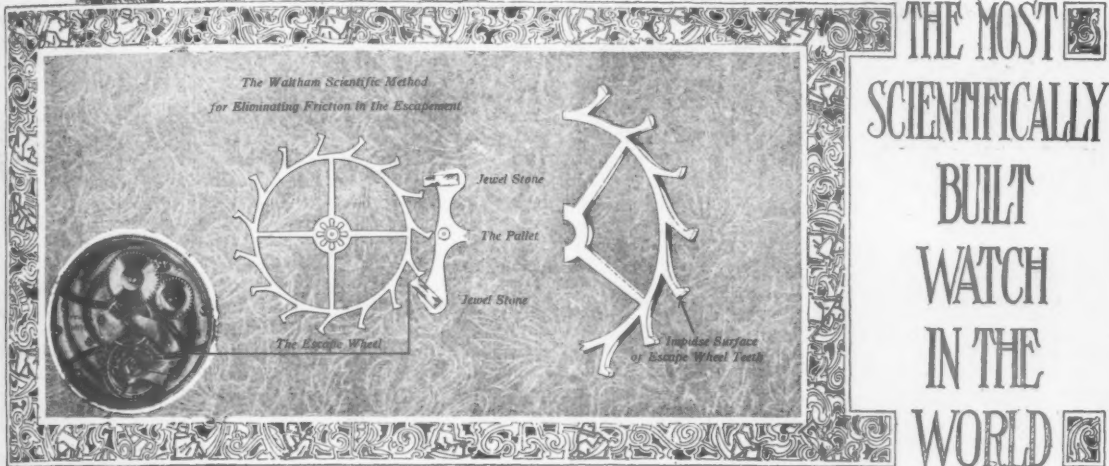
"Six thousand. But if you think for a minute—"

"And how much for the bracelet?"

"Fifteen hundred. But look, Helen—"

"And I know the rings are worth the

PROOF



THE MOST
SCIENTIFICALLY
BUILT
WATCH
IN THE
WORLD

The Waltham Scientific Method for Eliminating Friction in the Escapement
Which Means Accurate Time-keeping and Dependability of Your Watch

THE pallet stones (pieces of selected Ruby or Sapphire perfectly formed in rectangular shape and highly polished) check the power which comes from the main-spring in your watch and then release it 18,000 times or beats per hour.

In these governing functions of the escape-wheel an impulse is given to the balance wheel, which is transferred in governed movement, called Time, to the hands of the watch.

Think, for a moment, of the possibility of friction, where the pallet jewels slide over the impulse surface of the escape-wheel teeth (illustrated above) 432,000 times every twenty-four hours!

Here was an opportunity for Waltham invention to minimize friction practically to the vanishing point. And friction is the most insidious and dangerous enemy to correct time-keeping in the works of a watch.

After years of experiment and development, Waltham invented a machine equipped with a diamond cutter which not only cut the diameter of the escape-wheel to its exact size, but left the impulse surface of the teeth so perfectly shaped (rounded) and highly polished that when the face of the pallet stones (jewels) slid across that surface, friction was practically reduced to its ultimate minimum.

It can readily be seen that this development of the diamond cutter has given the Waltham Watch a positive and valuable advantage in time-keeping and unvarying performance.

The ordinary method of making an escape-wheel is to polish with some polishing compound, which being composed of gritty elements cannot be used without particles of grit becoming embedded in the polished surface. This in time roughens the surface of the pallet stones, eventually causing greater friction and consequent variability of time-keeping.

The Waltham Scientific Method, then, of cutting and polishing with a cutter made from a diamond is another hidden, yet vitally important, superiority in the "works" of a Waltham Watch which provides an unanswerable reason why your watch selection should be a Waltham.



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or four thousand more." She scooped the lot back into the miniature trunk.

"There!" she said. "You take these, and either sell them or raise money on them. And if that isn't enough, we'll sell the furniture! And if that isn't enough—"

But Samson would listen no longer.

"No sir," he said, and clasped his hands behind his back. "I wouldn't let you do that for me—not for all the money in the world."

"But what if it wasn't for you?" she half-laughed, half-cried.

"It makes no difference, honey. I wouldn't do it for you, either."

"But what if it wasn't for either of us?"

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Oh, Samson! Can't you guess?"

Not for the life of him could he guess; and he showed it by his wondering, stubborn expression.

"What did you think I wanted a car for yesterday?" she asked, "—and a place out in the country—and all those other things I asked you for?"

But even then he couldn't guess, and so at last she had to tell him—not in set phrases, nor in treble nor alto, but quite in the immemorial manner. And when she was through, he still stood there, still smiling and listening, his gaze far away as though, let us say, he was watching the far-off flight of a stork—far, far off but unmistakably headed in his direction

—perhaps that same old stork with which my story opened, now grown to be an older, wiser bird.

"Aren't—aren't you glad?" she whispered, stepping back and looking up at him with eyes like stars.

"Glad?" he cried. "Glad?"

He advanced upon her with arms opened like a traveling hay-fork, and there for the present we will leave him—the most dangerous part of his pilgrimage over, the most wonderful yet to come.

WE are not quite through with Abner though.

"I hear Samson's come home," said his next-door neighbor one morning.

"Yep—come home last night, him and Helen. Going to fix the old place up and settle down for a while."

"Going farming?"

"Farming? Heh! You'd think so, Eph, if you seen the check that I seen last night." He took a cautious look toward the house and then whispered in his neighbor's ear.

"No!" gasped Eph.

"Uh-huh!" said Abner, unmoved. "Abner said he'd do it. Seen it in him. Why, the very day that boy was born, old Doc Chase he said to me: 'Abner, said he, 'this aint no ordinary baby you've got here. This here is the future President of the United States of America, and gosh, he'll make a good one!'"

WITH SEVEN PARADISE PLUMES

(Continued from page 62)

exhaustion. Hours later she heard Jim's footsteps on the stairs. His hand rested on the doorknob, and the pulse in Rachel's throat beat like a prisoned bird. He came into the room, stumbling in the darkness before he saw her. He paused, irresolute of speech, and upon that moment hung the years that came. If he had pleaded— But Jim Eldred pursed his lips into a sound he strove to make a nonchalant whistle. To the girl in the chair it was insult. "Well, what did I tell you?" he boasted. "The luck's turned, for sure." Against her silence he went on, cheerfully blithe. "I won two thousand dollars tonight, Rache, old girl. Tomorrow we go to New Orleans."

But the next day Rachel Eldred was speeding westward to Chicago alone on a ticket bought out of the forty dollars her husband had given her from the roll he had won on Doris Elton's loan.

WORK was the whole world of the Rachel Eldred whom you might have seen, had you chanced to buy your hats in the French room of Faber's. No one knew she was married. No one in the great store knew anything about her except what they saw of her from half-past eight in the morning until half-past five in the evening. Celestine, born Hogan and married Considine, and for twelve years head of the section, knew her as their best saleswoman. "Although I don't know how she does it," she confessed after scrutiny of the girl's sales-slips proved wrong her scrutiny of the girl.

"She shames them into buying," said Miss Manly, departmental assistant.

Scorn of the women she served and love of the goods with which she served them had become the dominant emotions in Rachel's narrowed life. All her hatred of her loneliness, her poverty, her struggles concentrated into bitterness against women she believed more fortunate. Why should they have everything and she have nothing? The world-old riddle, which even Chinese big-feet wives ask when they wait upon little-feet wives, obsessed her. She had chosen her lot, to be sure. She had left her husband, and refused to go home to her people, but she knew that both decisions came from the same fundamental pride. She was being true to herself in holding to them. Why, then, she insisted, should she be punished? Because she was young enough, however, to demand something positive out of the wreck of the temple she had pulled down, she turned to the beauty of handwork that Celestine brought back from Paris twice each year.

OUT of all the hats that ever came to Faber's none caught and held the girl's fancy as did the one with the seven paradise plumes. It came to the shop room on the day when Bob Duncan came to see her. He was a more personable Bob than she remembered as the soda dispenser in his father's shop, and he beamed upon her with the pleasure of a small-town exile who finds another in the big city of their dreams of Mecca. His mother had sent him her working sketch



ONE-HALF MILLION BUILDERS OF GOOD WILL

Dodge Brothers business has just reached and passed another milestone in its history.

In a little over five years more than one-half million Dodge Brothers Motor Cars have been placed in the hands of owners.

If this sales record represented the appeal of a price, the total would not be particularly impressive.

The important thing is that the car is not thought of in terms of price, but in terms of value.

How often you hear the car spoken of — and how seldom the price!

It is the quality of thought that surrounds it which makes this success noteworthy.

Because people think well of these cars, it is still impossible for Dodge Brothers to build enough of them.

Seldom has there been a finer example of the force of friendly thoughts.

It is an inspiration and an encouragement to build well — because the reward, in America, is so great and so sure.

With nothing but good will toward them in American homes

—how could Dodge Brothers do less than they have done?

Nothing has checked or hindered, for so much as a single week, the continued bestowal of this recognition and reward.

The eagerness to own the car is greater today than it ever has been.

The reason is not far to seek.

Take first the mere numerical ownership.

Remember that the satisfaction of one-half million owners is not casual, but deep and profound.

Multiply them by the average family of even three.

Remember that all of these are warm friends.

Then think of that leaven of thought leavening the whole mass.

You will begin to understand, then, why Dodge Brothers have been building new buildings ever since the business began.

You will understand why the works in which the car is built are still steadily spreading and expanding.

You will get an idea of how much men can do when the homes of America are solidly behind them.

DODGE BROTHERS, DETROIT

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During the last year, more than 100,000 students studied Y. M. C. A. courses under the guidance of earnest instructors. These courses provide the clearest and most practical instruction at the lowest possible cost. They represent the ideals of a great service organization. Let us explain how the United Y. M. C. A. Schools can help you to grow in power and usefulness.

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and he had come to ask her to go to dinner with him. "I don't know that I should," she said honestly, thinking of Eldred and the obligation to him that separation might not make void. "I don't know why you shouldn't," Bob persisted. "Then I'll come," she yielded. "Will tomorrow night do?"

"Make it tonight," he pleaded. "I'm lonesome. I've been working in Chicago a year, and I haven't talked to a girl except the cashier in the arm-chair cafeteria."

"I thought that a man—"

"You're wrong," he said. "He's worse off than a girl, because he can't even do his own mending at night."

He left, with her promise to meet him at the street entrance when the store closed. She had a momentary curiosity about him, wondering where he worked and how he would succeed, but her thoughts went winging to wonder how Jim Eldred managed his life without her. The thought that he might be as lonely as she went through her with a pang, but she crushed it down in the assurance that he had no need for loneliness. He had money in plenty, of course. He could buy his companionships, his friends, even his loves. Doris Elton would—She went back of the gray-tinted walls of Celestine's salon to hide the tears that rushed to her eyes. There, resting on a counter, set in one of the beflowered boxes out of the rue de la Paix, she saw the turban of the paradise plumage.

"Oh!" she cried, thrilled by the golden glimmer of its beauty, her hands reaching instinctively toward it as a child's grasp at a bauble. "Isn't it lovely?" She bent over it in worship. "May I try it on?" she begged Miss Manly, who smiled in answer. "Isn't it gorgeous?" she went on ecstatically, viewing her reflection in the mirror and trying not to reveal her satisfaction in the transformation the hat made in her appearance. For beneath it she was no longer the Rachel Eldred who struggled for her living through loneliness and want, but the wife on whom Jim Eldred had showered his easily won money. The thought was too bitter for lingering, and she set down the turban swiftly. "It's not my style," she told Miss Manly.

"Oh, yes, it is," the other woman declared. "It takes your type to wear those Paquards. Somehow, though, there's a type of woman who thinks they were designed for her. One of them will buy it, and look like a new saloon."

"If only she would buy it soon," Rachel hoped.

"She will. It's reduced to ninety-five dollars because it's come a little late in the season."

That night, dining with Bob Duncan, she pictured herself swaying through a hotel lobby, resplendent in the Paquard and in all that should go with it: Never before had she realized how her life with Eldred had educated her into love of luxury. Only when her starved sense of beauty cried out for one bit of expression did she know how she missed the surroundings he had provided when he could. She knew that she was only half-heeding Bob Duncan, and that he was disappointed in her, but she could not summon her

roving thoughts to keep pace with him. She felt that he was patient in asking her to dine with him again that week and in gratitude she accepted.

"The Paquard's down to seventy-five," Miss Manly told her the next day. "Celestine thinks it may be left because the rush is over. Now's your chance." She laughed good-naturedly. "With the count off, it's only sixty-eight fifty."

For two weeks Celestine's judgment was justified, and Rachel Eldred went every day to the shrine to revel in the sheer loveliness of gold and black, in the sheer beauty of line that nimble fingers in a French workshop had wrought. Even the fact that the paradise plumage was forbidden and had been given out through some clever arrangement between Paquard and Celestine made the crown the more alluring. "I never wanted anything so much in all my life," she told herself—and thought that she must only the hat, not seeing that she yearned for all that it meant to her rather than the symbol of her desire.

Her need, growing in her eyes, crowded itself in front of Bob Duncan as they dined one night. "Rachel," he said suddenly, "can I loan you any money? I and I grew up on the same street. We've been good friends since we were babies. I have a couple of hundred dollars I don't need right away. Mine's a pretty good job, you know. Let me loan it to you."

"I couldn't borrow money to buy a hat," she confessed, "and a hat is all I want."

He looked at her searchingly while she blew clouds of smoke. "Do you know what's the matter with you, Rachel?" he said. "You're in love with Eldred, no matter what he's done, and the best thing you can do in life is go back to him."

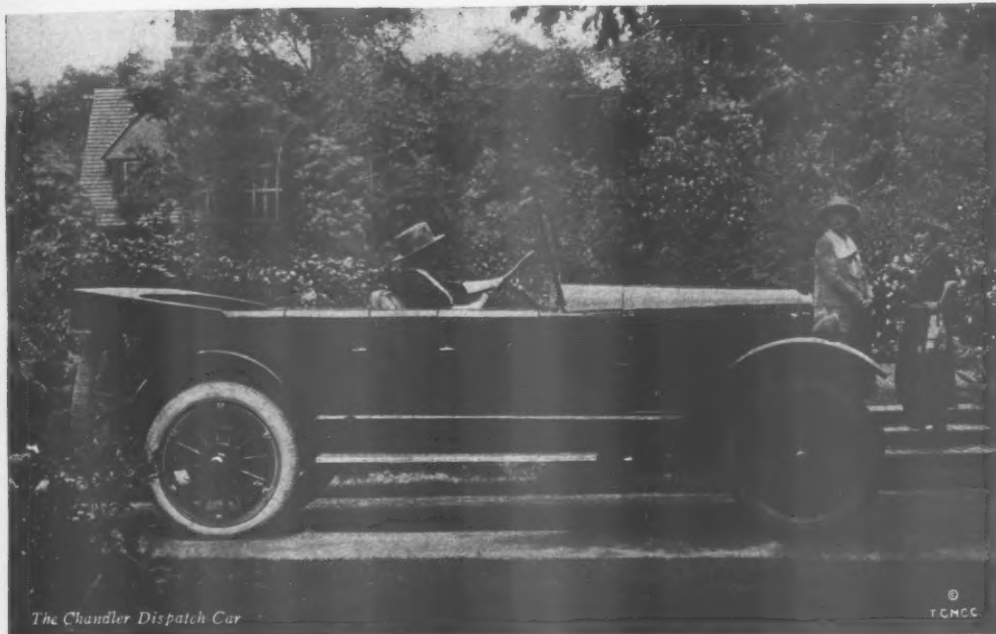
"I'm not!" she cried so angrily that he shrugged his shoulders and suggested that they go to a show. Through the rest of the evening he was curiously friendly, but she had the knowledge that she bade him good-by, that she would not see him again, and she told herself that, although she was grateful to him for alleviation of her loneliness, she was glad he was going from her life. His presence accented too harshly the difference between the girl she had been and the woman she had become.

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It was the middle of the afternoon, the only busy time of the hat section when customers filled the gray salon of Celestine, that Rachel Eldred, coming from behind the screens, saw the Paquard flashing out of its beflowered box. Manly herself held it over a head of smoothly sleeked hair, then jammed it upon the woman beneath her at an angle that set its paradise plumage swaying.

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over ear and shoulder. "Perfect!" said Manly imitating Celestine's best tone. Rachel, her breath coming fast between fear lest the hat go to this unknown woman and anger that the woman should be able to take it after one swift glance upon it, moved nearer. The woman swerved in the chair before the mirror to see the better the lovely lines of the golden glory of crown. She was Doris Elton. And, "I'll take it," she said with a quick decision.

"You won't!" said Rachel. "You can't have it. You've taken everything from me. You took Jim. I won't let you have this!"

With tigerish fury she reached over and snatched the gold-and-black triumph of the rue de la Paix from Doris Elton's head; then with quick, trembling fingers she tore from it the paradise plumage, ripped asunder its cloth of gold into tattered shreds and flung the mangled heap upon the floor, stamping upon it in fury. "You can't have it," she told Doris Elton. "I don't care what happens—you can't have it now!"

Conscious only of Doris Elton's amazed eyes, she gave no heed to Manly as she shoved her back toward the screen, nor to crowds of women coming nearer in shocked, surprised curiosity. No more did she notice Celestine when she stood over her. "Have you gone mad?" she was asking her. "What do you mean by causing such a scene? You are discharged, of course, this moment." But she stood rigid, looking only at Doris Elton, who was watching her with tense, unbelieving eyes. Gray walls began to circle, gray floor to rise. Doris Elton's voice came to her from a great distance. Then she knew no more.

She came back to a world of white that smelled strangely of mingled drugs. After a little while she knew it for Faber's hospital. A white-coated man stood near her; a white-garbed woman leaned over her. "She'll be able to go with you in about an hour," the man said to some one who stood in the room beyond. Then he went out, and in a little while the nurse followed him. She leaned back weakly. Who was waiting for her? Were they going to take her to jail for her act? She faced the disaster of punishment impassively. What did it matter? What did anything matter? No one cared. But who was waiting? She closed her eyes in utter weariness. She opened them to see Doris Elton at the door.

FUR-COATED, bediamonded, frankly, opulently aggressive as ever, she was watching Rachel with eyes from which the question had gone to make place for a queer softness. "Feel better?" she asked. Then, "Don't you say anything till I get through talking," she advised, and took the chair beside the cot. She swung back her coat, crossed her knees, settling herself into comfort while the girl watched her with hot, hating eyes. "First of all," she said, "I paid for that hat. Faber's will have nothing to say about it. I had a hunch that the old cat with the green eyes wasn't going to understand a lot of things I do. So you needn't worry. There won't be any trouble. Now are you going to believe that I'm your friend?"

"No," said Rachel Eldred.

"Would you mind telling me just why you hate me so good and plenty that you tear hats to pieces so that I can't wear them?"

"You know as well as I do."

"I don't know anything about it. I haven't seen you nor heard of you in a month of Sundays. I never did know you any too well, except that you were Jimmy Eldred's wife. That's why I paid for the blooming hat. You belonged to the gang once, and I couldn't see them put it over you for a flash of temper. But why the flash?"

"I don't care to talk about it."

Doris Elton's dark eyes narrowed in retrospection. "You and I never did run in the same pasture, did we? But I'd never have thought you held a dagger up your sleeve for me. The men of my crowd never even saw you coming. You never looked at any one but Jimmy. Why,"—she stared at the girl as if she would read through her silence to her secret of hate—"you surely don't think that I ever had anything to do with him, do you?" The silence gave her answer, and she threw back her head, and with a flash of white teeth, began to laugh. "Oh, my Lord, that's the funniest thing I ever knew," she gasped. "Jimmy Eldred, that I was always good to because he was Tom Elton's stable-boy!"

She laughed with a mirth that brought the tears to her eyes. Then, just as suddenly, she veered to anger. "Do you mean to tell me," she demanded, "that you were jealous of me? That you left Jim because you thought that he and I—"

"Well, didn't he love you?" Rachel challenged.

"He certainly did not. If you knew how funny that is! No, it's not funny. It's hideous. Here was Jim Eldred, clean and straight and good, never looking at a woman but you, and you cut out and leave him because you imagine he's in love with a woman who's known him since he was a youngster, knocking around the stables. When did you quit him?"

"You ought to know. I left him the day after you loaned him money at Pimlico."

"Because of that? My Lord! It'd serve you right if he'd forgotten all about you and taken up with some other girl."

"Hasn't he?"

"You don't deserve to know anything about him. You're a little fool, a silly little fool. I suppose you think you loved Jim Eldred."

"I did."

"You didn't. Any woman who treats a man that way for no more cause than you had doesn't love him. You loved yourself, and you loved his love of you. Love him? You don't know what love is. Listen to me!" She leaned forward, her dark eyes gimleting the girl. "I'll tell you something that ought to make you understand. Did you ever hear them tell about Tom Elton? And how he went from one woman to another, letting me eat out my heart watching him and waiting for him to come back to me? And did they tell you how I stayed? No one knew why, but I. I knew that some day Tom Elton was going to want me more than he had ever wanted anyone or anything in all his life, and I was going to be right there when he did. Well, the

day came. It was the day he died. And the one good thing in me, the one thing I can remember without turning away from it, was that I was there. I know what I am better than you do, but I know that when the Recording Angel comes to balance the books, he's going to remember that Doris Elton stuck to the man she married. That's love, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Did you love Jimmy that way?"

"I didn't know I did. Perhaps I didn't."

"I guess you didn't love him so very much when you made a bigger row about my getting the hat than you did about thinking I was getting him."

"It wasn't the hat." She strove to rise to defend herself. "The hat only meant all that I couldn't forget."

"I see." She toyed with a jeweled chain. "Have you been working here ever since?"

"I worked in worse places before I got here."

"Have you ever heard from Jim?"

"No."

"Did he ever know where you were?"

"No."

"I suppose," she said, "that you think he's hitting all the high spots. Well, he's in a hospital in Louisville. The crowd's looking after him. He's been pretty sick, and he's just on the mend. It won't be ice-cream for a long time. Are you going to be game?"

"Are you sure he wants me?" It was the last blaze of her love.

"The boys say that all the time he has had fever he kept calling for you. Nobody knew where you were."

"Oh!" she reached for her purse, remembering ruefully how slender was her store. Doris Elton took her hand. "Honey," she said, screwing her lips into a queer, twisted smile, "there's a friend of mine who thinks I'm going East this evening, but he has another guess coming. I'm going to take you to Jim."

SHE hummed a tune under her breath as Rachel donned her hat and coat. The smile that she gave the girl carried assurance that she appreciated the humor of the fact that she was the messenger fate had chosen to return Eldred's wife to him. It told, too, her understanding of the gulf that lies between the woman who's good and the woman who isn't.

It was Rachel who bridged it. "You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din," ran her thought as she went after Doris Elton through the aisles of Faber's into the winter twilight of the city.

Outside, beneath violet dusk through which ran golden lights, she spoke. "I hope," she said, "that I'll always love Jim as you loved Tom Elton."

"It can't be done," said Doris Elton. Her eyes scanned the twinkling lights. "But you'd better try damned hard," she added, "if you want to get anything out of the game, for it's all that counts in life, dearie. It's the giving and not the getting that makes us what we want to be. Take it from me. I know."

Against the crowd on the street she set her shoulder, and Rachel, her eyes like star-shine, followed her through the dusk.

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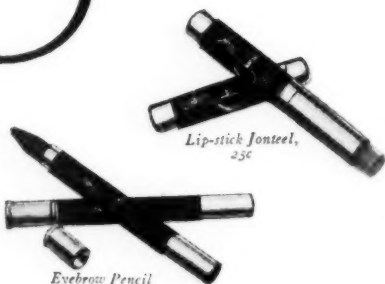
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LAMPERT

(Continued from
page 86)

up, and shaking excitedly, examined the lock upon the door. He went to the other door and listened and heard Sallet speaking to a clerk. He sped noiselessly back to the front door, turned the knob of the spring lock and darted out into the corridor. The elevator by which he had ascended with Sallet was in the front; there was, he perceived, a stairway in the rear. He tumbled breathlessly down four flights of stairs into a hallway, at one end of which he saw a door that opened on the alley. He rushed out and ran east in the alley across Dearborn Street; he crossed State, and still in the security of the alley, stopped to observe with satisfaction the mud which had splashed his Sunday shoes.

He saw above the shoes his neat black stockings, clean and without holes, above these the short legs of his unworn blue knickerbockers; his immaculate coat matched these, and he had on a white shirt with a wide clean collar. If he saw Mrs. Markyn, she would ask him where he had got these clothes and what had happened to him, and he would have trouble answering her questions. She might not have the same feeling toward him in these clothes as in his old ones. Safety demanded that he travel in the alleys, but truant officers and police would be curious about a boy in alleys in such good clothes. He went on perplexedly. He noted behind a truck a boy of nearly his own size, dirty and dressed in comfortable old clothes with holes at the elbows of his coat and in the knees of his trousers; and he stopped guardedly in front of him.

"I'll trade you clothes," Peewee offered.

The boy surveyed him in astonishment. "What's the big idea, kid?" he inquired. "Gone nuts?"

"No; I mean it."

The boy felt of Peewee's clothes incredulously. "You aint game enough," he urged.

"I am."

They exchanged outer clothes and shoes behind the truck; and the other boy, seizing the coat without waiting to put it on, dashed swiftly away down the alley, apprehensive that Peewee might change his mind. Peewee, contentedly kicking his feet in the boy's worn shoes, turned north.

HE crossed the bridge and again, for security, took to the alleys. At Chicago Avenue he turned east, then north. The Lake Shore Drive and the wide, curved esplanade which here breaks the rush of waves stretched before him. He halted, studying nervously a huge stone structure with driveway and garages on his left. This was Beman's house. Beman did not often leave his house or look out at its windows, but his many servants had seen Peewee, and one of these might be looking out and recognize him. He retraced his steps to the first cross-street, went west to Astor, walked north a block past Beman's house, returned to the Drive and sat down to wait upon the breakwater.

It was almost certain Mrs. Markyn

would take her walk on such a sunny day. He stiffened expectantly after a half-hour's wait, as, looking to the north, he saw a limousine swing into the drive and stop. Mrs. Markyn, descending, crossed to the esplanade, the motor attending her upon the drive as she walked slowly south. Peewee trembled eagerly as she approached. Her slight start of surprise and excitement as she saw him, was warning to him to keep guard upon himself.

Circumstances, he knew, had made her suspect him of some connection with her family. It was this painful speculation in her mind that, with her woman's interest in his friendless childishness, had made her want to find a home for him until she could learn who he was.

"Where have you been?" Mrs. Markyn asked.

He smiled at her with calculated innocence. "I didn't come," he said.

"That's not what I mean. You ran away."

"Yes'm."

She sat down beside him on the concrete step. "Please tell me why you didn't stay there," she inquired.

Should he pretend to her it had been from fear of Beman? Should he tell her something else? Her nearness had its effect of bewilderment upon him. She had on a dress he had not seen before; he thought it prettier than the others. Her dark hair was looped under a close round hat. The faint, sweet odor of her presence, as he breathed it, made him fight against an impulse toward tears.

"I didn't like it there," he replied.

"Why?"

"I just didn't like it."

She looked wonderingly at him. "You mean to say you ran away from where you would have had good food and clothes and some one to look after you, just back to the streets?"

"Yes'm."

"You're like a little wild thing," she observed. "I can't understand you. Don't you know that some day you'll grow up, and that you ought to have the things now that will make you a strong, good man?"

"Yes'm," he said.

Thought of the change which he soon must see in her was chilling him. There would not be, when they met again, that kind interest in her clear blue eyes, that sweetness in her smile.

"You wouldn't want me to take you back there again?"

"No'm."

"You understand that I want to do something for you—help you?"

"Yes'm."

"If I found some other place, some nicer place where you'd like to be and where they would take care of you, would you let me send you there?"

He pretended to consider; there was no harm in promising. "Yes'm."

"Will you go with me now?"

He drew away from her apprehensively. "No'm."

"Will you let me give you a note to some one who will feed you and take care of you tonight?"

He shook his head violently.

"Then what can I do? Will you meet me here tomorrow?"

He wanted to cry. Tomorrow she would not want to meet him; tomorrow she would think of him with bitterness and dislike. "Yes'm," he said.

"You'll surely come here?"

"Yes."

"I wouldn't let you go away—I'd take you with me now—only I don't want to make you not like me; I don't want to frighten you." She got up, holding out a five-dollar bill to him. "Be sure you have a place to eat and sleep tonight."

He put the money into his pocket, standing up because she had. He hung his head and put one foot upon the other in embarrassment; he wanted her to kiss him and did not know how to ask. She reacted unconsciously to his desire.

"We'll bind our bargain, then," she said, "like this."

He trembled violently as he felt her lips, and stood looking after her as she crossed the greensward and bridle-path to the waiting motor. She hesitated and turned back a step as though doubtful of her decision not to force him to go with her, but finally got into the car.

THE loneliness which choked him as the motor disappeared changed slowly to resentment. That she was never going to be like this to him again was because of Lampert. He had no feeling toward his grandfather except dislike and scorn. It made him angry that his father had not tried harder to stop Lampert. Instead of that, his father had let Lampert frighten him by saying that he was going into court. As he looked toward the great house just down the street, he thought that the fierce, self-willed, violent old man who lived in it would not have been afraid of Lampert; if it had been Beman whom Lampert had been dealing with, Lampert would have been stopped. Beman, in spite of his age, had given Peewee an impression of irresistibility; Peewee worshiped strength, for the streets had taught him that boys who let other boys frighten them never sold their papers. What, he wondered, would Beman do, if he knew what Lampert was preparing?

He turned back, finally, to Astor Street and walked south. He dodged through a narrow passage between two buildings and came out in the rear of Beman's house. The servants' entrance door opening upon the paved court was, he knew, usually unlocked. He pushed at it and crept into the servants' hall, letting the door reclose noiselessly. Listening and hearing nothing, he went up the stairs to the great, beautiful main hall. He listened again, then crossed the polished floor without a sound and looked in at the door of Beman's den. The old man was there, sitting in front of his wood fire—immense, and looking violent even in repose. He did not notice as Peewee slipped in noiselessly and sat down. Peewee coughed, and Beman looked up.

"Hello," he said.

"Hello," said the boy.



Photo by Brown Bros., N. Y.

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Beman, he saw, looked past him to the door. He was looking, Peewee understood, to see who had brought him in. He had had agents searching for the boy and supposed some one of them had found him. When he saw no one there he seemed surprised.

"Who brought you here?" he asked. "I just came," Peewee answered sweetly. "I like it here."

Beman swung around in his chair to study Peewee. "You were here before," he said, "and ran away."

"I ran away because you were going to show me to her and tell her who I was; now I don't care if you do that because she's going to be told anyhow."

Beman's surprise increased; his brows came down over his cold gray eyes. "What's this?" he demanded. "Who's going to tell her?"

"My grandfather is going to make my father tell her."

"Make him?" Beman demanded. "How?"

"He's going to show in court that he was married to my mother." Court—the Juvenile Court, at least—were places known to Peewee. He swung his short legs and smiled at Beman. "They say they found what shows it in her trunk."

"Found what?"

"I don't know. It shows that he was married to her."

"A marriage certificate?"

"I don't know. My father says they made it up themselves."

"Forged it? It must be some sort of certificate, then."

The facts of life, though not the names that many of them were called by, were known to Peewee. The circles he had lived in were those where people broke the laws. He had known of men who married several wives without the formalities of divorce; and what had occurred to him on the street was that, in such a case, the first wife was respected and the others regarded as unfortunate. Would Beman, he had asked himself, allow his granddaughter to be threatened publicly with that kind of misfortune? Beman had wanted to separate Markyn from his wife, but he had not been willing there should be a scandal. Lampert was preparing scandal. Peewee had not consciously weighed these things, but he had felt that if Beman knew what was going on, he would not like it.

With satisfaction he saw Beman get up onto his stiff old legs and move irritably about the room. He looked bigger and more threatening standing up than in his chair. The gray skin of his face had whitened, and his voice was angry.

"Who started this?"

"I said my grandfather."

"Ben Lampert? There's some one helping him. Who?"

"He's got a lawyer."

"What's the lawyer's name?"

Peewee shook his head; his father had not told him that.

"That can be found out. Do you know anything more about this?"

"No sir." Peewee considered. "My father said he was going to tell her tomorrow," he remarked.



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Dignified design, of distinct beauty, marks

all Cleveland Six models. The finish and the upholstery are of high quality, and low under-slung spring construction adds greatly to riding comfort.

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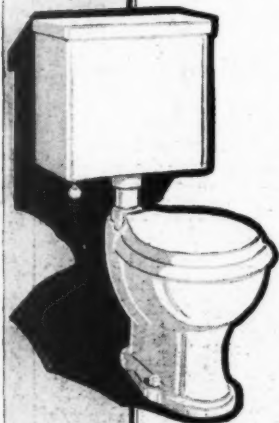
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BEMAN pressed a bell. "Take him away," he directed when the servant came. "Put him into some decent clothes—and keep an eye on him," he added.

The old man's admonition to the servant to watch Peewee did not disturb the boy. A boy who had escaped from so many institutions and climbed over so many walls would have no difficulty in getting out of Beman's house when he wanted to, in spite of the servants. But in his interest in discovering what Beman was going to do he did not want to get out of the house yet. The manner of the servants with whom he dined told him nothing; they, he appreciated, were not likely to know that anything was going on. He spent the night in the bed he had had when he was in the house before, and awoke with excitement which increased as the day progressed. In the late afternoon the servant who had charge of him was told to take him to Beman in his den.

"Come here," the old man directed when the servant had left them.

Peewee went near him doubtfully. Beman turned him so that he faced the light and studied speculatively his small face, with its distinctive, handsome nose and mouth and violet eyes shaded by their long lashes of deepest black.

"How do you like being related to people?" he inquired.

Peewee hesitated. He had been perfectly contented on the streets before he had learned who his parents were. Mostly misfortune had come to him from that discovery; but he recollected that except for it he would not have met Mrs. Markyn.

"Who?" he inquired.

"Well, Ben Lampert—he's your grandfather, ain't he?"

"Yes sir."

"What do you think of him?"

Peewee violently shook his head. He did not at once find the words to express his intense dislike for the ex-boss.

"How about Walter Markyn?"

Peewee did not know; he neither liked nor disliked his father.

"You look like him, you know."

"Yes sir," Peewee replied.

"There's no mistaking that. Are you glad that you're his son?"

"No sir," said Peewee.

"You mean because he wasn't married to your mother?"

"No sir." The stigma of illegitimacy was not a conscious burden to the boy.

"What then? You'd be glad if he had been married to her, wouldn't you?"

"No sir."

"Why not?"

Peewee could not answer that. He had an indefinite feeling that it would be an additional misfortune to everybody, including himself, if his father had been married to his mother.

"Who told you that he wasn't married to her?" Beman inquired.

"He did."

"He'd have said that anyway, wouldn't he?"

DID Beman mean that they had been married? Peewee was commencing to believe that the old man did mean



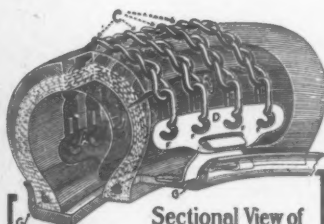
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"Weed Tire Chains, Mr. _____, have safeguarded you and your family from skidding accidents for many years. They've given your cars traction in sand, mud, snow and on wet, greasy, slippery pavements. They are good old friends, indeed.

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"Dobbins Blow-Out Chains complete the trio of 'Auto Necessities.' They are often referred to as a 'Spare Tire in the Tool Box.' When your last spare tire 'goes bang,' you don't have to run on the rims or wait on the road for a new shoe. You can quickly and securely hold the worst blow-out with this wonderful device and go merrily on your way. You'll try them? Good! They only cost \$1.50 for your 4½ inch tires. Yes, that includes an inner patch. You also want a folder descriptive of them to give to a friend. I am sorry to say that I haven't one left. I'll order a supply of them today from the



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|----------------------------|--|
| A - Main Plate | F - Curved Slots permitting adjustment for due amount of tension |
| B - Bent Lip on Main Plate | G - Rim of wheel |
| C - Cross Chains | H - Inner Patch |
| D - Second Plate | J - Blow-out |
| E - Auxiliary Hook | |

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that. He perceived vaguely that the misfortune this would entail related to Mrs. Markyn. It would make his own position toward her immensely worse. Exactly why his existence should become for that reason more utterly unforgivable to her was not plain to him, but he felt that it was a fact, and his throat closed up, and he stared at Beman.

"Go over there," Beman directed, "and sit down."

PEEWEE backed toward the chair and drew himself up onto it, still gazing at Beman in anxiety. A peculiar sympathy existed between the hard old operator and the boy, and he appreciated that Beman was also anxious. The old man said nothing more, but watched the clock. At last he straightened suddenly and listened as the doorbell rang. A servant appeared in the door, and Beman nodded to him with relief. The servant retired, and Peewee stiffened as the big form of his grandfather replaced him in the opening. The man who followed Lampert in before the servant closed the door upon them was small, dapper, completely bald, with a crafty, hawklike face. He was, Peewee understood, the lawyer.

Did Beman intend Peewee to remain? He had not sent him away. As Lampert, perceiving him, fixed his gaze upon him, the boy hitched away from him nervously upon his seat. His grandfather, since Peewee had seen him, had taken on still more the look of a man who would not work; he appeared, the boy saw uneasily, triumphant.

"This is an unfortunate business, gentlemen," Beman remarked.

"Unpleasant, Mr. Beman—unpleasant on all sides," the lawyer put in unctuously.

"Beman—" Lampert began. The lawyer checked him.

Peewee shrunk unhappily. Beman was not threatening; he was not fighting. Whatever it was that he had learned, it had, apparently, conquered the old man.

"You are Mr. Rubenwall?" he said to the lawyer.

"Yes, Mr. Beman."

Peewee saw anxiously that Beman waited in a subdued way for them to commence; when they did not, he was obliged to speak.

"There is some evidence, I understand, which you have discovered," he conceded.

The lawyer rubbed his hands; he had apparently been waiting for this. "Will you allow me, Mr. Beman, to state the facts?"

"I'd be glad if you would," Beman agreed.

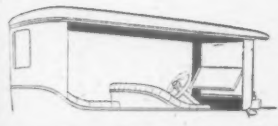
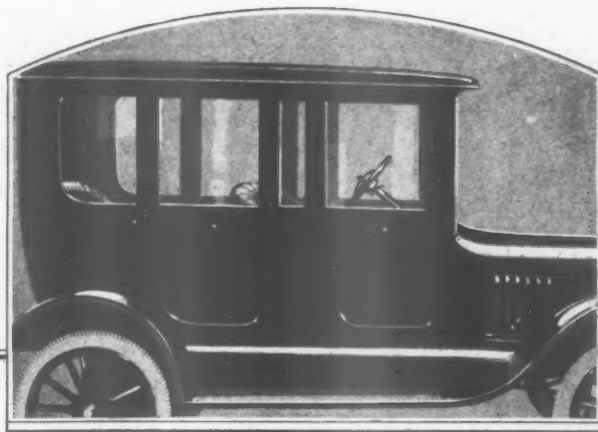
"Before the death of Mr. Lampert's daughter," the lawyer stated, "her family had not seen her for some years. There had been previously a still longer period when they had not known her whereabouts. You know, I have been told, the particulars of the discovery at the time of her death that she had a son."

"Just so," said Beman. "There is the boy."

Peewee moved uneasily upon his chair as all three turned to look at him. He avoided Lampert's gaze and stared miserably at Beman—whose placating manner



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ner was causing an agony of bewilderment for the boy.

"Mr. Lampert had had so little recent communication with his daughter," the lawyer went on, "that he was as much surprised as others by the existence of this child."

Lampert seemed about to interrupt, but the lawyer stopped him by a gesture. "I speak of this, Mr. Beman, because Mr. Lampert's ignorance regarding the boy is one of the reasons why the discovery Mr. Lampert has now made was not made earlier. Two days before she died, Mr. Lampert's daughter sent for him and his wife and told them about the boy. Following her death, Mr. Lampert, as supposedly her nearest relative, assumed charge of her daughter's effects."

Pee-wee remembered that; his grandfather had assumed charge particularly of his mother's rings.

"Among other things which came into Mr. Lampert's hands was, naturally, her trunk. The trunk contained, besides wearing apparel, such articles as a woman would be likely to accumulate in a number of years of—er—nomadic life."

"You mean letters?" Beman inquired.

"There were, among other things, a very large number of letters."

"From Markyn?"

"None, so far as Mr. Lampert has yet found, from him. Mr. Lampert set himself to the careful examination of these letters."

"Naturally!" Beman broke in. The dryness of the old man's tone gave Pee-wee for the first time a ray of hope. Beman, it showed him, was not being fooled; Beman comprehended, as clearly as Pee-wee did in his precocious street-boy wisdom, that Lampert had examined the letters to see whom they gave him a chance to blackmail.

"This examination took—if Mr. Lampert will pardon my saying so—a considerable time when conducted by a gentleman of Mr. Lampert's limited education. Because of that, these many weeks elapsed before Mr. Lampert discovered, inclosed in one of the letters—with which, however, it had nothing to do—the evidence to which, Mr. Beman, you just now referred."

"It shows," Lampert broke out impatiently, "that she'd ought to have been living with him in his big house all the time. She'd ought to have had her servants—"

THE lawyer stopped him. Pee-wee trembled at the assurance in his grandfather's voice.

"Just what is this?" Beman asked.

"What Mr. Lampert found was the written statement of a minister, informal but legally correct, that on the eighteenth day of October, 1908, he performed the ceremony of marriage between Walter Wendell Markyn and Helen Lampert."

"We've had the thing looked up," Lampert exclaimed. "We've found the town and the place where the ceremony was done! She'd ought to have been riding in her automobile all the time; she'd ought to have had money to send to her folks and have us to live with her!"

"As Mr. Lampert says, our evidence shows that Helen Lampert, for more than

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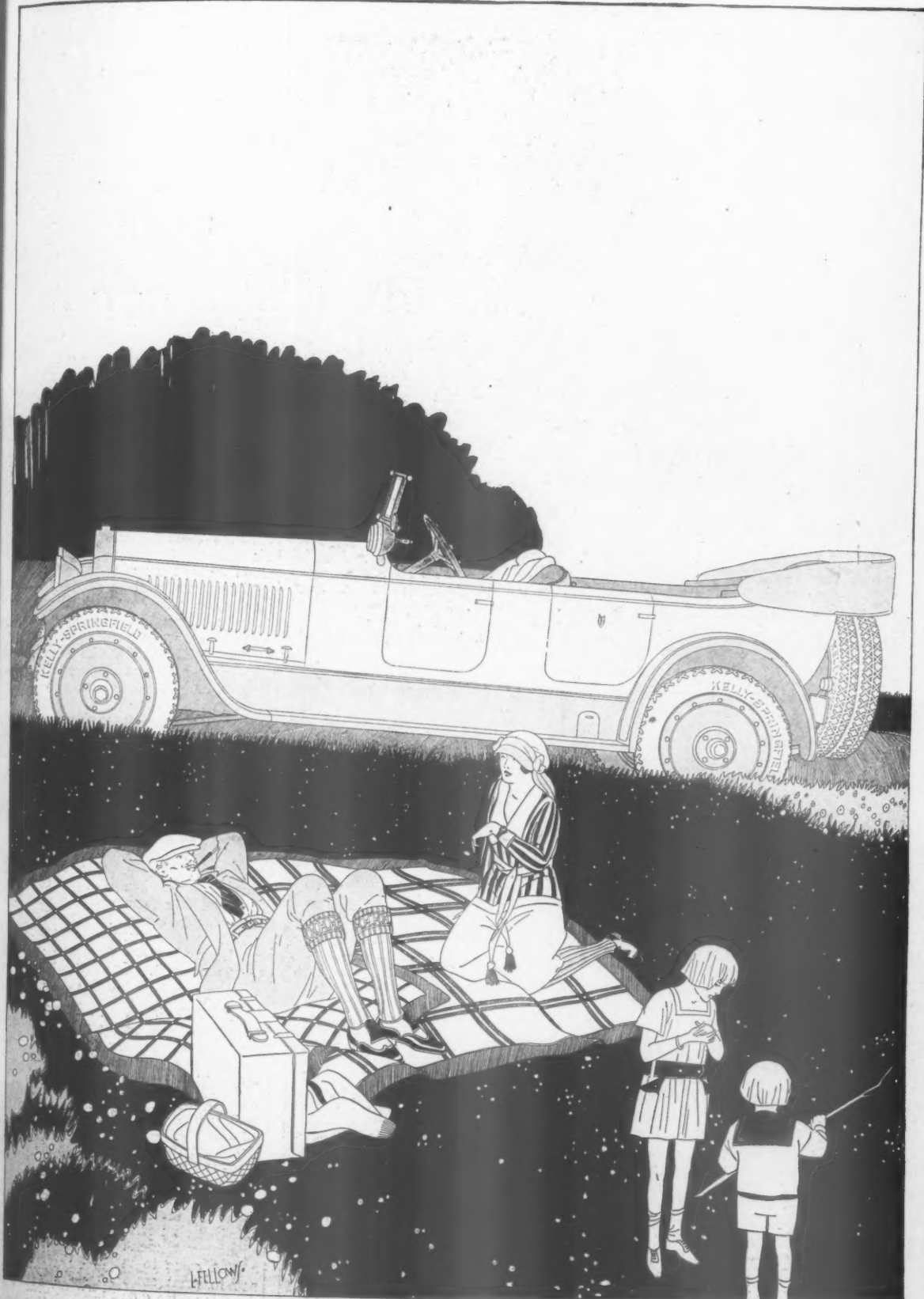
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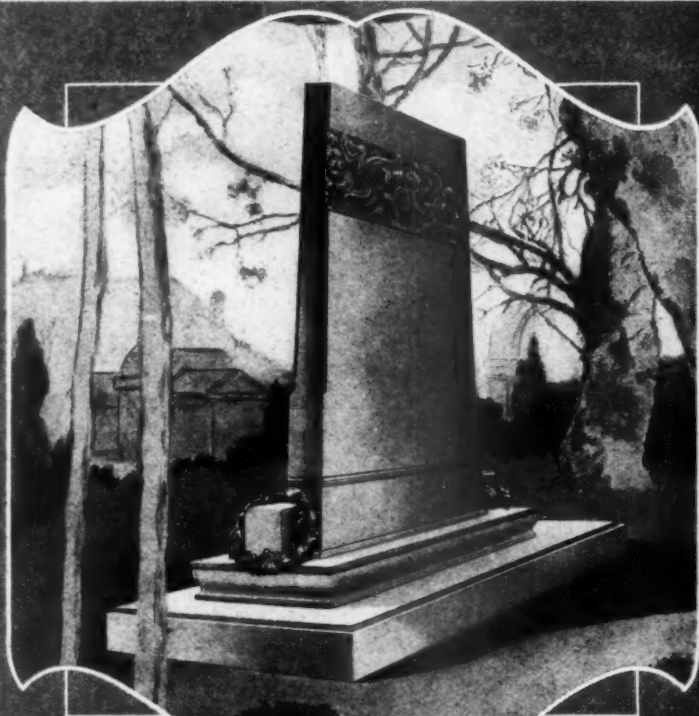
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"Don't you think we ought to start along, Tom? It's getting late and we might have some tire trouble."

"You forget, my dear; we have Kelly-Springfields on the car now."



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ten years, was deprived of her marital rights—"

What, Peewee wondered, were marital rights?

"Helen Lampert is dead," said Beman. "It doesn't matter to her now what she was deprived of. What we're discussing here is the effect of this upon my grand daughter."

"That is why we came to you, Mr. Beman."

"Got this thing with you that you speak of?"

The lawyer took an envelope from his pocket. Lampert moved to interfere.

"You can trust me," Beman assured him.

Peewee thrilled excitedly. He knew that Beman, if they let him take the paper, would tear it up; he sank back in disappointment as the old man, having looked through the writing, merely gave it back.

"I'm not going to ask you yet how much you want from me for this," Beman remarked. "All I'm going to ask is, supposing I buy this now, what's to prevent you and Ben Lampert from sitting down and writing out another one and coming around and expecting to sell that one too?"

Peewee shook. Beman got up with difficulty from his chair and moved on his stiff old legs to the hearth-rug and stood facing the two men.

"I wasn't sure about all this," he said. "He might have been fool enough some time to marry her. But now I know, if this is how you had to get at the thing, he didn't. So I'm not asking you now what more there is you've got. You've figured out about the witnesses and license, I suppose; maybe you found some place where those things could be faked, or where the courthouse and its records had been burned. I'm not interested in that. This thing wasn't made to carry into court. It was made to sell to Walter Markyn. When I found that you were ready to sell to some other buyer,—that's me,—I thought it probably was a frame-up. If you hadn't come here, I wouldn't have known quite what to think. I've seen you both here now, and I've seen part of what you've got. That is enough for me."

"We expected you to do some talking, Beman."

"I'm doing it. You listen!"

PEEWEE shivered at Beman's voice, which, thin and cracked with age, had become suddenly that of the cold-blooded operator who had watched coolly his fortunes fall or grow, who had ruined twenty men and had himself been ruined half as many times—of the gambler who had fought not only against men, but had staked his all against drought and flood and taken his toll of dollars out of famine.

"There's been a lot of scandal said about me in my time; you might take note there's never been a word or line about my women-folks. Once long ago a man came to me and wanted money not to print some lie about my oldest daughter. He didn't print it, because by the next day noon I would have had him dead. I was a young man then; I don't do things now in that fashion."

"This is a legal matter, Mr. Beman."

"You listen to me! You're to drop this talk of Helen Lampert and her son entirely. I don't mean merely that you're to keep it out of court; there's to be no kind of publicity." The voice was clear and cold and hard as ice. "If you splash my granddaughter's name with one drop of your mud, I'll ride you—I'll ride you both. If you don't know what that means, ask the boys on the Board of Trade about other men I've ridden. You've both got pasts that won't bear looking into; most men have. If you haven't, I'll make them for you. Do you get that? I know what kind of men I'm dealing with; I'll make 'em. I've got the money and the influence; and old as I am, I've still got the brain to bedevil you both until you wish that you were dead. There'll be no city big enough and no village small enough for you to hide in. The only dollar you'll ever get again will be by begging. You understand me?"

"We hear your actionable threats."

"All right. Read that!"

He moved stiffly to the table, took a paper from the drawer and threw it toward the lawyer. The lawyer hesitated, stooped and picked it up. He read it, and his hands dropped at his sides.

Pee-wee watched him curiously, wondering what this meant.

"All right," the lawyer said. "I'm through."

Lampert swore loudly. "You're what?" he asked.

"I'm through. I drop the case. You'll drop it too, if you're wise."

LAMPERT moved angrily to seize the paper, but stopped at the lawyer's gesture.

"You'll permit me, Mr. Beman," the lawyer inquired, "to read this to my client?"

Pee-wee strained forward in his excitement to hear. He could not distinguish all, as the lawyer read in a low, rapid voice; but he could catch some of the sentences.

"State of Illinois, County of Cook." "What had that to do with it, Pee-wee wondered? "Whereas the undersigned Henry Mellen today appeared before me." What followed this, Pee-wee could not hear. . . . "Deponent states he is, and was upon the twelfth day of June, 1919, employed as a physician in the office of the coroner of above county."

Pee-wee's experience had shown him what a coroner was. More words followed which he could not make out. . . . "Did upon the twelfth day of June, 1919, perform upon the body of one Helen Lampert an autopsy." Pee-wee did not know what that meant. He caught other, but not directly succeeding words. . . . "Due to suspicion of death by drugs administered with murderous or suicidal intent!" This was not plain to Pee-wee. . . . "Resulting in determination that death had ensued from natural causes, complicated and induced by excessive use of alcohol and drugs." There was no understanding this stuff, Pee-wee decided. . . . "All as now upon file in records of the coroner's office. Deponent further states that the above Helen Lampert, upon

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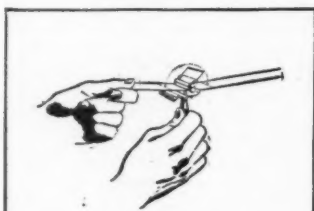
DOES your face burn after shaving? Probably it is because you use dulling razor blades.

You can avoid this discomfort if you use the AutoStrop Razor—the safety razor that provides a sharp, keen edge for every shave.

A razor and stropping device combined in one—that's what you get in the AutoStrop Razor.

Because of its unique, patented design, the AutoStrop Razor can be stropped *without removing the blade*. Just slip the strop through the razor head. Give the razor a dozen quick passes over the strop. In ten seconds you have a "new" sharp, shaving edge! 500 cool shaves are *guaranteed* from each dozen blades.

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No skill in stropping is necessary to renew the fine keen edge of the AutoStrop Razor blade. Just slip the strop through the razor head and pass the razor back and forth along the strop. You don't have to take the razor apart nor even remove the blade.

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whose body he performed this autopsy had never borne a child."

Peewee stared at Beman in perplexity. The words of the last sentence, taken just as words, were plain; their meaning he could not at first make out. His mother, the words said, had not had a child. But here was Peewee; and Lampert, he saw, was as perplexed as himself.

"Why, look at him!" Lampert exclaimed. "Don't he look just like his father?"

"But not like your daughter," Beman returned.

PEEWEE commenced to understand. Lampert had—what was it Beman had called it—forged? Lampert had forged a marriage, and Beman had forged to beat him. He had fooled the lawyer, who stood with his hands hanging limp at his sides. He had, Peewee could perceive by Lampert's manner, fooled Lampert too. They did not know the truth so well as Peewee; they had not been there when his mother, dying, had told him that he was her son.

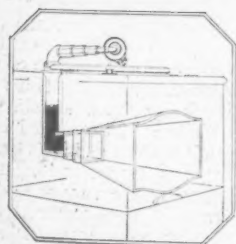
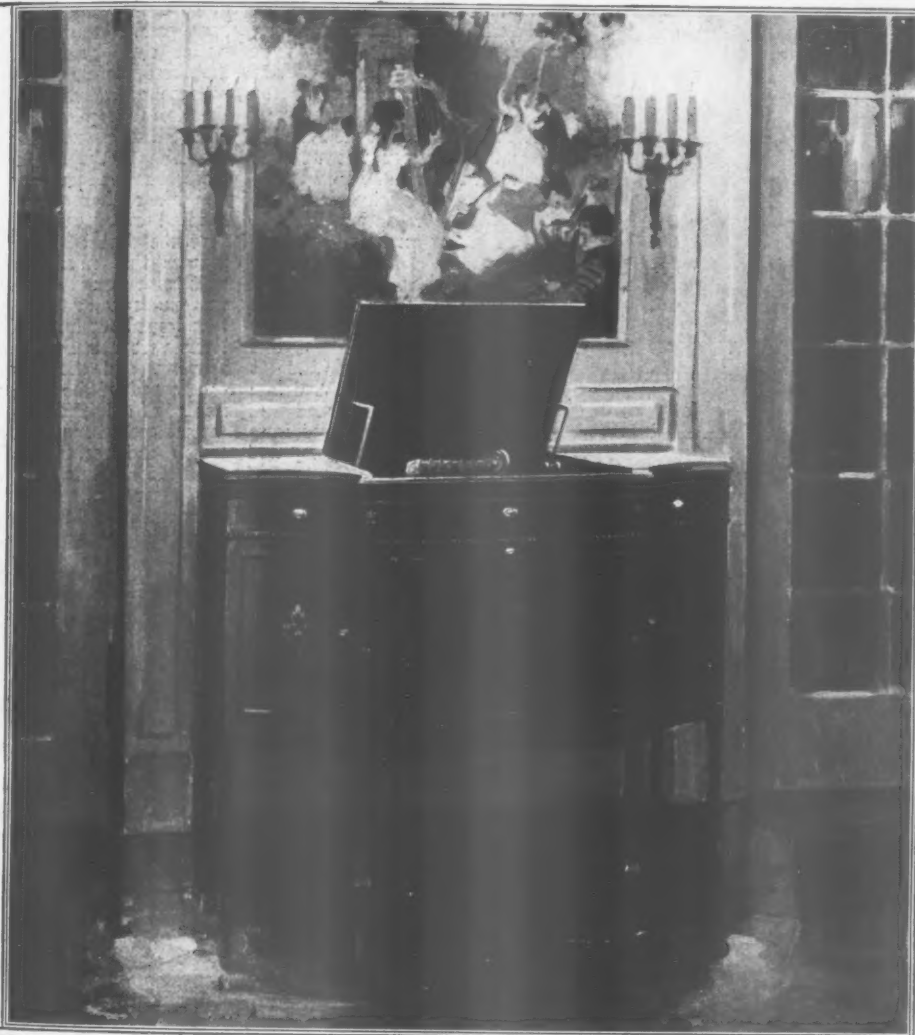
"We quit," the lawyer said to Lampert. "If she had no kid, what's to be gained?"

Peewee understood still better. Beman had not attacked the false evidence of marriage; he had instead taken away the stake for which Lampert had played—the claim on Walter Markyn through Peewee. The boy was not capable of stating this plainly to himself; but the manner of Lampert and the lawyer made him comprehend. He gazed at Beman with admiration and awe, and smiled with pretended innocence at Lampert. Lampert did not, he appreciated, any longer believe himself Peewee's grandfather. The boy was grateful to Beman for coming that, even though Peewee himself still realized their relationship. But the cleverness, as it seemed to the boy, with which it had all been done, renewed Peewee's fear of Beman. The old man did not, he knew, forget a purpose; he had defeated Lampert because he was not willing the scandal of Peewee should be known publicly. This did not mean that Beman would not still tell Mrs. Markyn about the boy.

He decided that it was time for him to get away from Beman, out of the house. But having decided this, he continued to sit still, unable to forgo tasting his triumph over Lampert and the lawyer. They were talking together in low tones, still examining the paper. They did not know that it was Peewee who had set Beman on them; that he himself had indirectly done all this by telling Beman. The old man saw the boy gazing at him and smiled dryly back at him, and Peewee warmed pleasantly at this sign of understanding between them. He looked again at Beman as he stood upon the hearth-rug—massive, his hands clasped behind his back, his old legs wide apart and his great head pushed forward. Then he sidled off his chair and went and stood beside him, clasping his small hands behind his back and putting his short legs wide apart like him; and the two watched as the servant showed Lampert and Rubens out.

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THE YELLOW HORDE

(Continued from
page 52)

erating the conglomerate smell of the cabin which usually clung to her. The reek of coyote-scent and fresh blood that permeated the spot still further concealed it, and though the wolf caught the peculiar odor, he could not trace its source to her without closer inspection. He was hungry and advanced to the meat, tearing off huge bits and gulping them down till the wire edge of his hunger was appeased, then sidled cautiously round the steer to nose the mating she-wolf. As he neared her, his eyes peered over her at Breed. That foreign odor which he had noted he now traced to Shady, but having once accepted her it did not trouble him. Shady flinched away from him, and Breed's lip writhed up and cupped away from his ivory fangs. There was no mistaking the snarl that accompanied this baring of his teeth, and the gray wolf moved back to the opposite side of the steer.

Thereafter both wolves ate sparingly, and each watched for the least hostile move in the other. The coyote-pack ranged in close, awaiting the departure of the timber wolf. He frequently turned his head and favored the closer ones with a baleful stare, the move always accompanied by a flattening of his ears, and the ones so fixed by his appraising eye shrank deeper into the sage. Each time this occurred, his head swung abruptly back to ward Breed.

SHADY feared and hated the wolf. If she thought of him in human words, she would have given him the name of Flat-ear, and with good reason. In coyote, fox and wolf the ears are even more expressive than the eyes. A wolf's ears work when he sleeps, one of them inclining toward the least sound that reaches him.

It seemed to Shady that the big wolf's ears were chronically laid as he regarded Breed. She was unversed in the ways of her wild kinsfolk and could not know that the yellow wolf and the gray were sparring for the advantage of the first blow in the savage fight that would soon be waged for the right of proprietorship—herself as the prize.

Each time that Breed appeared off guard for a split second the gray wolf laid his ears, the involuntary betrayal of muscles tensing for the fatal spring; and Breed's own flattening ears each time evidenced his readiness to counter. Shady sensed the enmity between them without knowing the inevitable result. Her mode of fighting was the impulsive way of the dog, the act almost simultaneous with the desire, and this protracted, cold-blooded calculation was new to her.

Breed gave an opening at last, turning and reaching for a bite of meat, and exposing the unprotected side of his neck. Flat-ear struck for it without a sound, driving straight across the steer with all his weight behind the gleaming rows of teeth. Breed dropped flat, and as his enemy swept over him, he swung his head up and sidewise in a terrible

slash that tore an ugly rent in the gray wolf's paunch. They whirled face to face—and both were treated to a series of tremendous surprises which shattered all previous convictions.

Shady harked back to the ways of her domestic ancestors, to the custom of dashing into a neighborhood dog-fight and mauling the one strange dog in the lot, regardless of sex—and Breed had been her friend long before he had become her mate. Flat-ear was the one strange dog to Shady, and he found himself assailed by a screeching fury who fought without care or caution, her sole aim being to sink her teeth in any available part of him. As he leaped away from this unnatural she-wolf, he was met by a second surprise. The coyote pack had learned to strike when the leader struck. Peg flashed round a sage and laid open his flank; and as he whirled to face this new enemy, Cripp slashed him from behind. Three coyotes darted past Breed, and before he had recovered from the shock of the surprise, his enemy had fled.

Flat-ear did not flee from fear, but from an overwhelming sense of the whole world gone mad, the shattering of tradition and the overthrow of natural laws. The chaos in his mind sent him flying from this insane place within six seconds after his first attack. A mating she-wolf had been transformed into a she-fiend, and in the same second he had been mobbed by coyotes. No doubt he believed with Collins that strange things had come to pass of late in the ranks of the coyote tribe. Flat-ear headed back for the hills out of which he had come, and as he ran, his bewilderment crystallized into a consuming hatred for the strange yellow wolf, the hybrid beast who had upset the established order of things. He did not know that Breed himself had been so nearly paralyzed with sheer astonishment that he had not joined the attack.

The coyotes settled once more to the enjoyment of their interrupted banquet. Breed little realized that he had made a mortal enemy, one who would not merely attempt to deprive him of his mate during the running moon as would any other wolf, but one whose enmity was for the individual, and who had marked him for slaughter when next they met, regardless of time or season.

CHAPTER V

THE number of coyotes in Collins' territory had been cut down by half, and only the wisest were left. As they grew more trap-wise, the wolfer increased the cunning of his sets. Clearly marked cow-trails crossed through every low saddle in the foothills, and Collins studded these with traps. After once his scent was cold, the coyotes had nothing to warn them of these sets; but trail-trapping is largely chance, and not productive of great results.

Breed saw one coyote in a trail-trap and he forswore the following of cow-trails. The coyotes also soon learned to avoid them. Collins noted the absence of coyote-tracks on trails that had once been padded thick with them, and the wolfer chuckled over this evidence of their resourcefulness.

Some of Breed's pack had fallen victims to the trap-line, but their places had been filled by new recruits, every one trap-wise to the last degree. But even these found it increasingly difficult to maintain their lives. For a new menace hovered over every coyote that ranged near the foot of the Hardpan Spur, a menace that filled the hardest prairie wolf with dread. Many a lone coyote was suddenly startled by a huge shape that leaped for him and bore him down. None thus attacked lived to spread the warning, and the only knowledge the others had of the lurking fiend was the finding of old friends stiff and dead, their throats gashed open by savage teeth. The tracks and scent round these murder-spots identified the slayer.

Flat-ear spent his days high in the hills, and at night he dropped to the low country to perpetrate his crimes. Coyotes had violated the customs of centuries and turned their teeth against him. He now wreaked vengeance for this affront.

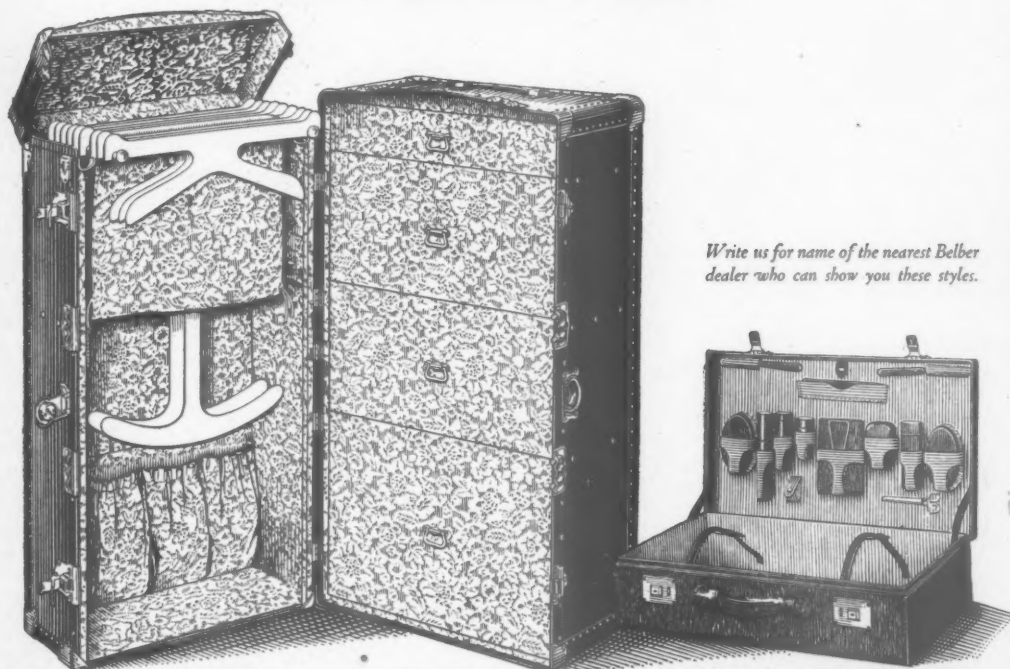
At the end of a week he had left a long trail of victims behind, but not one of Breed's pack was among them. Those that had pack-hunted with the yellow wolf and learned the advantages of combined attack in killing heavy game now put that same knowledge to good use for their own protection, sufficient evidence of the quick adaptability with which coyotes rise to meet any new emergency. Mated pairs now ran close when hunting, sometimes traveling in fours. Flat-ear soon discovered that the teamwork of a pair of fighting coyotes was more than a match for even his great prowess, and his kills grew fewer.

Cold fear clutched every coyote that caught a fugitive scent of the gray killer, but Breed did not share this dread. He was Flat-ear's match in size and strength, and so was not concerned. Breed could not know that Flat-ear's hatred had become almost an obsession, that night after night the slayer was craftily trailing him, and that killing coyotes was but a sideline to lighten the hours of a protracted stalk for Breed himself.

While Flat-ear plied his bloody trade and made the nights fearsome for the coyotes, men found one more method of harrying them by day. The first Breed knew of this danger was one day when he lay with Shady on a high point of ground. There were many things about Shady which he could not fathom. From the first he had found much of mystery in her. She insisted on traveling in broad daylight whenever the notion seized her, and she seemed not to share his fear of horsemen, often rising incautiously from her bed for a better view of them, careless of the risk of their seeing her.

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Shady cocked her ears alertly at a distant sound; and the same note, faint as it was, roused Breed from his nap. Somewhere off across the foothills several men had raised their voices in a wild outburst of cheers. This sounded again and again, each time from a point nearer to where Breed lay. A band of antelope sped past without following their usual custom of stopping to look back. Breed caught the vibrations of pounding hoofs, the sound of many hard-running horses blended in one.

The cheers and the hammering hoofs came closer, and Breed fixed his eyes on the edge of the flat bench spread out for half a mile before him. A coyote spurted from the mouth of a draw off to the left of Breed's position and raced across the flat. He was stretched out and running his best; but before he had covered two hundred yards, five great wolf-hounds poured out of the draw after him. They were slender and long-coupled, capable of tremendous speed, and before the coyote passed below Breed, the lead dog was but a few lengths behind.

For the most part the dogs ran silently and wasted no breath in senseless clamor; but occasionally one of them loosed an eager yelp, the sound as thin and keen as his body. A dozen riders streamed across the flat on furiously running horses, cheering as they came. The coyote doubled to evade the snapping jaws of the foremost dog, and as he turned, another struck him. He rolled over twice, and when he gained his feet, he faced his enemies. He knew the game was up, but he went down fighting—fighting against odds without a whine; and Breed watched five savage dogs mauling a limp dead thing that ten seconds past had been his valued friend. These strange beasts did not move off as the men rode up; and Breed realized with a shock that the men did not ride with the purpose of killing them—that they were leagued together, and that the dogs were the creatures of men, just as sheep and cows were men's property.

Breed stole down the far slope, keeping the high ground between himself and the horsemen. Shady followed him closely, moving furtively and with many backward glances, her tail tucked almost between her legs; and Breed, accustomed to Shady's indifference to the approach of riders, wondered at this sudden reversal of her usual ways.

But it was not the men that roused Shady's fear; above all other things she feared and hated dogs. The few that had followed their masters to Collins' house had always sensed the wild blood in her, and at the first opportunity they had pounced on her with intent to kill. Shady had found friends among the coyotes, and had found only hostility among dogs.

The owner of the dog-pack lived some ten miles from Collins, and the whole countryside had assembled to witness the first race. There were fewer riders in each chase as the novelty wore off, but the days were few when the owner failed to take the dogs out for a run. Wolf-hounds run only by sight, and coyotes are slippery prey, doubling and twisting on their trails to throw their pursuers off, and so the result was always in doubt,

and every chase did not yield a coyote pelt.

After that first day Breed did not wait for the dogs to draw near, but started off the instant he found them coming his way. It was Shady's habit of daylight traveling that led Breed into grave danger within a week after the dog-pack had made their first run. He followed Shady down the bed of a gulch which screened their movements from prying eyes but at the same time served to shut out all the various signs by which Breed received long-range warnings. As they loitered along the bottom of the draw, the antelope bands were flashing the danger sign; range cows on the ridges all stood facing the same way; everywhere coyotes were scurrying for cover; but all these things passed over Breed's head. A coyote flipped into the gulch, and he did not tarry, but passed Breed with merely a sidelong look and vanished round a bend.

BREED was instantly alert. He darted to the rim of the draw and looked warily about him. There was not an antelope in sight, and no cows grazed in the little basin that flanked the gulch at the point where he left it—not a sign to warn him of the source of the danger. He ran for the crest of a ridge for a better view—and the next instant he was in full flight back the way he had come; for as he sky-lined himself on the ridge, five sharp-eyed wolf-hounds a quarter of a mile away had darted toward him. He knew that they had seen him and were coming, that death was sweeping down on him.

He turned up the gulch and followed it toward the hills, Shady running her best to keep up with him. The dogs fanned out to look for him as they topped the ridge. The upper end of the draw widened to blend into a broad mesa, and the hounds caught sight of the two wolves as they headed out across the flat. Breed had held his lead, but a clean race of over a mile confronted him, the flat affording not one shred of cover. He swung his head slightly to one side as he ran, one backward rolling eye taking in every detail behind him.

He saw the five specks increase their speed and knew that they had sighted him again; they angled slightly, and he watched them draw gradually together, their courses converging on the center of his line of flight till they were once more running well bunched—and gaining.

His lead was being steadily cut down, the gap perceptibly lessened; the specks showed larger with every backward glance till every dog was clearly visible. Shady was fleet, but her speed was no match for Breed's, and he would not leave her. The high-pitched sinister yelps sounded from behind him as the eager dogs closed up, putting forth every effort to end the race before the wolves reached the choppy bad-land brakes at the far edge of the flat. Shady's pace was lagging, and they gained the first gulch of the broken country a bare fifty yards ahead of the leading hound.

The gulch feathered out into a maze of branching draws, and Shady lost Breed on the first sharp turn and ran on alone, while the dogs streamed past after the yellow wolf.

Breed slowed his pace, fear for Shady's life surmounting even the fear for his own; but as the lead dog flashed into view without any sound of a fight behind him, Breed knew that his mate was safe and he turned on the reserve speed he had not been free to use while she ran with him.

The country ahead was a tangle of small flat-tops, crisscrossed by a network of bad-land washes and cut-bank draws; and for two miles he eluded the dog pack by sheer brainwork and cunning. But the hounds pressed him hard. Their speed was greater than his own, and each time they lost sight of him they spread out both ways.

Breed's one aim was to reach the hills, knowing that once among the trees he could shake them off. His course led him ever nearer to the base of the spur, but he knew at last that he could not make his goal. His muscles had lost their spring, and his breath came in leaky gasps; the dogs would pull him down on the first sagebrush slopes of the hills before he could gain the shelter of the trees.

He broke cover and started up the last long sloping bench that led to the base of the spur. The mouth of every gulch behind him seemed to belch forth a dog, and they raced across the bench spread out for two hundred yards.

Then Breed sprung one last desperate trick—a coyote trick. A bad-land wash intersected the flat squarely across his route and Breed leaped to the bed of it and fled fifty yards along its course, then flashed into a narrow coulee that led straight back toward the dogs. The draw was shallow, with scarcely sufficient depth to cover him, but the dogs did not suspect, and as they darted on ahead, Breed doubled back through the very center of the pack. He ran with the last of his strength, crept from the sheltering coulee and leaped into the center of a heavy clump of sage where he crouched flat and peered out at the puzzled dogs. Of all the beasts there was but few with the brains to plan such a coup and the nerve to carry it through when winded and played out—and with certain death the penalty for a single slip. The ruse would not have fooled a trail-hound for an instant, but with sight-hunting coursers it worked.

Breed watched the dogs swing wide and scour the country off to the right of him till they appeared as swift-skimming dots in the distance. Then one of them lined up with increased speed as he topped a ridge. One after another Breed saw them flash over the sky-line and disappear.

CHAPTER VI

SHADY'S first impression after taking the wrong turn in the coulee was one of vast relief at having evaded the dogs. The recovery of her breath was accompanied by a vague sense of loss which rapidly deepened into an ache of loneliness so oppressive that her whole spirit was weighed down by it. She started up through the long crescent-shaped neck of bad-lands that partially incircled Collins' cabin and extended clear to the foot of the spur, knowing that this was

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Breed's favorite route when making for the hills. She moved slowly and with many halts, cocking her head sidewise and tilting her ears for some sound of her mate. She came out into a funnel-shaped basin that sloped down from the first sharp rise of the spur. The small end of it formed a saddle between two knobs, leading to Collins' shack as through a natural gateway.

Shady trotted to the saddle and gazed down at the wolfer's cabin five hundred yards away, the spot which had meant home to her over the greatest part of her life. The door stood invitingly open. She turned and saw the five dogs pouring down the funnel of the basin. The sudden purposeful increase of speed which Breed had noticed as the dogs left his field of view had been occasioned by the sight of Shady standing in the notch.

Without an instant's hesitation Shady headed straight for that open door, a haven of refuge which had served her well in the past when assailed by the dogs of visiting ranchers. The dogs were jaded and Shady was fresh, and she reached her goal without their gaining an inch.

Collins sat smoking his pipe when he was startled by the frenzied entrance of his former pet. Shady failed to pause for greetings, but made one mad leap from the door and slid to the farthest corner under the wolfer's bunk.

Collins grunted with surprise, and for a space of five seconds his brain refused to function with its usual snap. Then he rose and crossed to the door to discover the reason for Shady's head-long home-coming—and slammed it shut with but a single second to spare.

One dog rose on his hind feet, standing higher than a man, and savagely raked the door from top to bottom with his claws, while another opened his jaws wide and closed them, his teeth splintering across the smooth surface as he sought to gnaw his way inside. The remaining three circled the cabin, sniffing explosively at the cracks between the logs. Shady was seized with a fit of excessive shivering induced by these dread sounds, and Collins heard her hind leg joints beating a spasmodic tattoo on the cabin floor. Then he turned on his ready grin.

"Just one split second more," he said, "and they'd have surged in here and wrecked this plant for fair—and that's a fact!"

That night when Breed sent out his call for Shady, there was no answering cry. He called again and again, an agony of longing and entreaty in his tones. A sickening dread entered his soul—the fear that his mate had been caught in a trap, shot by some rider or killed in some other way by man. He little suspected that Shady was at that instant resting her head on a man's knee and enjoying the feel of his fingers scratching behind her ears.

"Good old Shady!" Collins said, roughing her head between his hands. "You're a renegade now, old girl—a she-outlaw; that's what you are. You've gone over to the wild bunch, and men will be out after your scalp; and they'll get it too. You don't know the ropes—" Shady suddenly stiffened at Breed's first cry.

"Don't need to be afraid of that,"

Collins assured her. "That's old Breed. He wont bother you. It must be hell, Shady, to be born astraddle of a fence like you, afraid of tame dogs and the wild bunch too."

Breed howled again, and Shady moved to the door and whined, scratching and sniffing along the crack. Her uneasiness increased with every howl. She clawed so vigorously at the door that it rattled on the hinges; then her pent-up emotions sought partial relief in action, and she ran in crazy circles about the cabin, weaving in and out among the furniture at top speed, running over and under the bunk and leaping over chairs; then she brought up in front of Collins and gazed pleadingly up into his face. The Coyote Prophet regarded her speculatively.

"I read you wrong, Shady," he said. "You're not afraid of Breed—you want to go to him. You're mated up with that yellow wolf. Two freaks paired up! If you track round with Breed, you may live longer than I thought. He'll show you how to beat the game." The Coyote Prophet crossed to the door and opened it. "Go to it, pet," he said. "He's a-calling you." But the last remark was addressed to a streak that vanished into the night.

Shady met Breed in the notch and frisked wildly round him. Breed's delight in this reunion was as deep as hers, but he was more dignified and staid, his emotions less openly apparent. All through the night Shady held so close to him as to brush against him as they ran.

SHADY rapidly absorbed much of Breed's caution. Two days after their race with the dogs, Shady had occasion to revise her estimates of horsemen. Twice in the same day, after imprudently showing herself in the open, she heard the vicious reports of their guns, and the bullets tossed up spurts of earth about her. Thereafter she followed Breed's lead in all such cases. Breed's way was the wolf way, recognizing no individuals among men, but classing them as a dangerous whole. There was but one reservation—Collins.

This eccentricity was the source of much worry to Breed. Shady could see no good reason why she should not revisit Collins when the mood so moved her. One night she turned abruptly from her course and headed for the twinkling lights of the wolfer's cabin. Breed turned with her. Cripp and Peg, each with his mate, ran on either flank. The coyotes stopped two hundred yards from the house, but Shady held straight ahead. Breed tried to dissuade her, but to no avail. He nipped her sharply, and its only effect was to cause her to tuck her tail and spurt for the house.

Breed stopped twenty yards away, every nerve quivering from excitement over this suicidal move. He heard Shady scratch at the door. It swung back, and a flood of light streamed out into the night. Breed heard a man's voice booming out a welcome—saw her jump up and put her paws against him, their outlines framed in the lighted doorway. Then the door closed, and his mate was inside with a man, the arch enemy of all wolves. Breed whirled and fled.

The coyotes were hard pressed to keep abreast of him, and after a wild race of some four miles he wheeled abruptly and retraced his course, the longing for his mate combining with curiosity to draw him irresistibly back to the spot where this impossible thing had transpired.

His pace slackened as he neared the house, then increased as he heard Shady's voice. Shady had met Breed in the notch after her first visit to the cabin, and she naturally assumed that she would find him there again. She repaired to the spot at once after leaving the cabin, and waited for him to come.

For three nights in succession Shady made her pilgrimage to meet her one friend among the world of men. Breed was puzzled by the mystery of these visits. But he fathomed it at last.

His nose told him that there was something in Shady's scent that was similar to that left by the dog-pack. His eyes had proved that those dogs were the companions of men. Eyes, ears and nose testified that Shady visited the haunts of men and was accepted as a friend. His nose further told him that Shady was half coyote, and her voice added proof of this. From out this fragmentary assortment of facts Breed found a satisfactory answer. He knew that Shady was of the wild, yet that she was also linked with the world of men, thus combining two things which in the past had seemed widely separate.

Each recurring visit confirmed this fact. Shady missed two nights; but on the third she headed for the cabin with the coming of night. The comparative warmth of early winter had given way to the gripping, penetrating cold of January. Breed's appetite increased with a corresponding drop in temperature, and he was hungry. But from Shady's actions he knew that she was seized with one of those queer lapses which called her back to former ways, and he delayed the hunt until she should return from this trip.

He prowled uneasily about the narrow saddle, and in his nervousness over Shady's protracted absence, he forgot the danger of following cow-trails and padded restlessly up and down those which threaded through the gap. And as he waited for her, a mortal enemy found the chance he had sought so long and was stalking him from behind.

Flat-ear dropped from the hills to follow his ruthless trade, and as he swung down the funnel basin, Breed's scent was wafted to his nose. The breeze held up the slope—he had the wind on the yellow wolf. He shifted across the wind, but it carried no coyote scent. His victim was alone. Flat-ear followed up the drifting current of scent and sighted Breed at a hundred yards. His feet made no sound, and the wind held right; the breed-wolf was unaware of his approach.

Breed saw a sudden flow of light from the cabin and knew that Shady was leaving it to come back to him. He sent forth the rally-call to the pack and turned to trot along a cow-trail. Then he gave a sudden mighty leap into the air and crashed down four feet away as he struck the end of the chain that was swiveled to the trap that had crushed his foot.

The next installment of this fascinating animal story will appear in the forthcoming October issue.



A thousand separate joys

Each serving dish of Puffed Grains contains a thousand separate joys.

Each grain is a bubble, thin and flimsy, puffed to eight times normal size.

A hundred million steam explosions have occurred in each, blasting every food cell.

The airy globules are crisp and toasted. They taste like nut-meats puffed. The morsels seem like fairy foods, almost too good to eat.

Yet these are the utmost in scientific foods. Two are whole grains, with every food cell fitted to digest. They are the foods that children like best, and the best foods they can get.

Serve with cream and sugar. Mix with your berries. Float in every bowl of milk. Crisp and douse with melted butter for hungry children in the afternoon.

They are nothing but grain foods. The nutty flavor comes from toasting. The flimsy texture comes from steam explosions. The delights are all due to scientific methods.

Serve morning, noon and night in summer, between meals and at bedtime. The more children eat, the better. What other food compares with whole grains puffed?

**Puffed
Wheat**

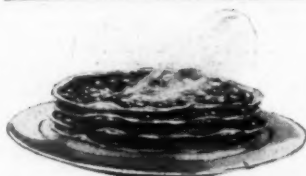
**Puffed
Rice**

**Corn
Puffs**

Also Puffed Rice Pancake Flour

The new pancakes

Now we have Puffed Rice Pancake Flour, self-raising, mixed with ground Puffed Rice. The Puffed Rice flour tastes like nut-flour, and it makes the pancakes fluffy. This new mixture makes the finest pancakes that you ever tasted. Try it.



The Quaker Oats Company

Sole Makers

3367

BRANNIGAN

(Continued from page 72)

Wimbledon, in whose precincts the Seven Pines Club was situated, neither missed nor ignored in ensuing days the development of relations between Natica Strong and this man Brannigan, whose apparent insouciance and perfect aplomb with the girl were equalized only by his attitude of exclusiveness toward everyone else. Speculation concerning him was the talk of the week; it ran a wide range. Some put him down as a bounder after the Strong money. The community almost without exception concurred in Jack Hansen's verdict that if he was not a crook, he gave a perfect imitation of one.

As for Natica, now fully enlisted in her campaign to win the Armbruster Cup, she most obviously was impervious to anything so intangible as atmosphere—which was uncharacteristic. Even when she encountered the first practical effect of the community's state of mind she was at loss to define the cause.

"I simply cannot understand it, Mr. Brannigan." She had motored over to the club to take the man home to dine.

"Then it must be abstruse." He climbed up to her side. "What can't you understand?"

"Why, I can't raise a scratch four to practice against. I know of old that it's the very dickens to knock one together, don't you know. But I never saw a crowd quite so indifferent."

"Sporting spirit running cold, eh?" She nodded, tooling the car around the drive.

"Yet, Bertha Hansen had no trouble, apparently. Her team practiced yesterday and are to practice tomorrow."

"H'm! Still I've often thought that in these mixed affairs the more practice one has, the worse one is off. I'm for no practice and duffer's luck. We shall win, of course. I saw Mrs. Hansen's team at practice yesterday."

"Win? Of course!" She swept him with a disdainful glance. "But you haven't seen our team."

"So I haven't." He laughed. She knew he was making fun of her; but it was reassuring, none the less.

Yes, reassuring, even when the thought occurred that she had yet to see this man with a polo-stick in his hand. Once she had suggested that they go out on the field and knock the ball about, but he had talked her out of it, just how she could not recall.

So impregnated with qualities of inflammability had become the emotions of Wimbledon over Brannigan that almost less than nothing was required to kindle public opinion to incinerating flame. As a matter of fact a great deal more than nothing transpired next day to start the conflagration.

TO begin with, Bertha Hansen and some half dozen of the young married set, together with Mrs. Graham Champney and a few other dowagers, were seated at tea-tables on the club veranda, heckling Nobs, the superintendent.

Vaudeville's Strangest Thrill

Meet Signor Friscoe, xylophone artist extraordinary—and vaudeville's newest purveyor of magic. Meet the New Edison—his chief "magic."

Signor Friscoe found that human ear cannot distinguish between his actual performance and its RE-CREATION by the New Edison. This astonishing act is the result. It's going big over the Keith and affiliated vaudeville circuits. Over 500,000 people have seen how:



Signor Friscoe

comes on to the stage and plays. His agile hammers ripple merrily over the xylophone keys.

Suddenly

Signor Friscoe holds his hammers poised in mid-air. But his xylophone performance continues—as if some magic influence were at work upon the keys.



Then the curtains part. The audience gasps. The New Edison stands revealed. It has been matching Signor Friscoe's performance so perfectly that its RE-CREATION could not be distinguished from his original performance.

Ask them to explain this!

THE absolute realism of the New Edison has been demonstrated by actual comparison with the art of living artists. More than 4,000 comparisons have been given, with more than fifty great artists, before a total of 3,500,000 people.

America's principal newspapers have reviewed these comparisons at length. They have conceded that the New Edison's RE-CREATION of an artist's voice, or instrumental performance, cannot be distinguished from the actual singing, or playing, of such artist.

It has been reported to us that over-zealous talking-machine salesmen have stated that the artists imitate the New Edison in these comparisons.

In the first place, it is a physical impossibility for any person to imitate the phonograph in a way to sustain this comparison.

In the second place, the artists who make these comparisons are of the first rank, and would not lower themselves to sing, or play, in an unnatural way.

In the third place, the music critics who have witnessed the comparisons could not, be deceived by an attempted imitation.

HOWEVER, argument is unnecessary. Signor Friscoe's extraordinary act makes the accusation of "imitation" quite absurd. Every one knows that a xylophone cannot be made to imitate a phonograph so as to deceive its hearers.

Hear Signor Friscoe when he comes to the vaudeville theatre in your town. He is the world's greatest xylophone player. Pay particular attention when he plays in direct comparison with the New Edison's RE-CREATION of his xylophone performance.

IF anyone suggests to you that the artists imitated the New Edison in the 4,000 comparison tests that have been given by the Edison Laboratories, ask such person to explain Signor Friscoe's act.

Your Edison dealer has a New Edison exactly like that used by Signor Friscoe. Test its supreme realism for yourself in the Realism Test.

The Price of the New Edison has increased less than 15% since 1914, including War Tax.

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Good Company



A GOOD BOOK, a quiet nook, and sweet NABISCO to eat between the thrills of the story.

Long after "finis" comes you'll remember NABISCO as the best part of it all.

Sold in the famous In-er-seal Trade Mark package.

NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY



"You say, Mr. Nobs," Bertha Hansen speaking,—"that Mr. Brannigan has not appealed to you as thoroughgoing?"

"Well—" The man hesitated.

"Well?" Mrs. Graham Champney fixed him with her bulging eyes.

"Well, he seems thoroughgoing in a way, ma'am. It's his actions."

"Actions, Nobs?"

"He seems a bit scary, Mrs. Champney, as though some one might be looking for him he didn't want to see, ma'am. Yes, that's the way it has struck me."

"Ha!" Mrs. Graham Champney swept a triumphant glance about the tables.

"It's just as Jack suspected," Bertha Hansen's face was no less triumphant. "He's hiding from justice. . . . Poor Natica."

"Poor Natica, indeed!" snorted Mrs. Graham Champney. "Poor idiot, rather! Do you know, I never— Well, Percy?"

Percy Snively, the only young man of Wimbledon who lived the life of an idle gentleman, sprang up the veranda steps, leaving the car panting in the drive.

"I have it!" he cried. His weak blue eyes were suffused with emotion as he waved a telegraph form agitatedly. "I reached Tommy Trafford at Lenox, and here is his reply."

He paused, sure of his effect, which must have exceeded his fondest expectations, and then read the dispatch with quavering voice. "Tell Natica not to lose her head. Brannigan a fugitive. Look out for your bank-roll, Percy." Snively placed the telegram carefully in his pocketbook. "What do you think of that?"

"Think of it! It's only what I suspected," Mrs. Graham Champney arose with decision. "There is, of course, one obvious duty, or rather two. First of all I shall telephone the police, and then I shall motor over to Cordelia Strong."

"Do you really think, Grace, that—"

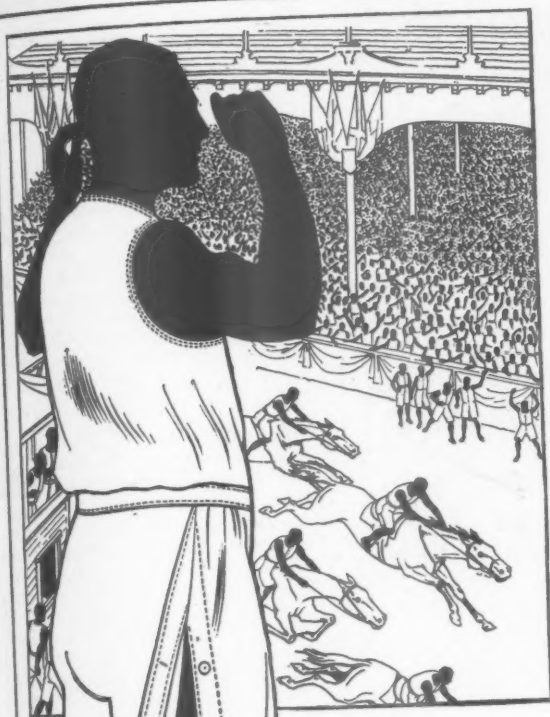
Just what the new speaker would have said to Mrs. Graham Champney was lost in an extraordinary commotion within the club—a drumbeat of hurrying footsteps, a crash, men's voices raised in shouts.

The vanguard of women hastening from the tea-tables into the club caught sight of Brannigan streaking out of the door leading to the porte cochère under which Natica Strong's roadster was standing, the engine running. The girl herself stood in the doorway as though dazed. Foundering down the stairs leading from the second floor were two men whose appearance might have been official had they not been in so great a hurry as to be undignified.

By the time they reached the door, Brannigan had leaped with the grace and agility of a Harlequin into Natica's car, throwing the engine in gear.

"Don't worry about the car, Miss Strong," he called. "I'll see you very soon." He waved his hand, and the roadster shot away from the club, down the drive toward the main road, while the two men sprang out of the door and made for a disreputable small car standing to one side of the drive. Having cranked it, they started away in hot pursuit.

"I'll wager they don't catch that car of mine," Natica, who had been standing rigid throughout the stirring incident, shivered, jerked her shoulders upward.



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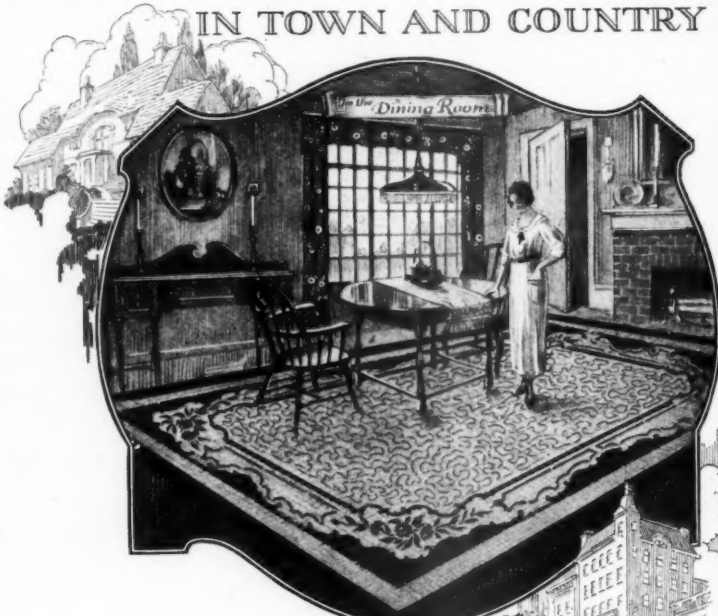
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IN TOWN AND COUNTRY



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So in buying grass rugs, whether for the dining room, living room, bed room—no matter what room or porch—they have their logical place in each through all seasons—you should ask for and insist on getting genuine CREX rugs.


Strong in sanitary and wearing qualities—rich but not offensive in coloring and design—CREX rugs are a joy and comfort to the housewife. No beating required. Dust sifts through to floor. Surface dirt quickly removed with broom or damp cloth and light shaking.

Beware of imitations, some of which are even made of split or crushed straw. Buy CREX rugs that for more than twenty years have graced the floors in millions of homes—modest and pretentious alike.

CREX is easily said and easily read. The name woven in the side binding provides an ineffaceable identification mark.

Handsomely illustrated catalog showing actual colors and sizes of the three CREX weaves—DE LUXE, HERRING-BONE and REGULAR—mailed free on request.

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Look for name in the edge of side binding

It's your protection and our guarantee

and then turned to Bertha Hansen with a superbly achieved smile.

"Natica! They are policemen! They are after Mr. Brannigan!"

"It would appear so, Bertha, yes. He seemed rather blithe for a man who—"

"Cool bravado! He—I don't want to hurt you, Natica."

"How silly, Bertha! I want you—I want you all to understand that my interest in Mr. Brannigan related to the Armbruster Cup match, he being the only available—"

"Of course, Natica; we understand. But do tell us what has happened?"

The girl shrugged.

"I'm sure I don't know. You saw as much as I saw. I came here to take him to Beaver Farms to look at Josh Wintinger's ponies. I ran into this situation. That is all I know."

She suffered for a few minutes the outburst of sympathy, indignation and horror which reared superficially as foam above that deeper current of intense, soulful satisfaction which these women felt in the stirring dénouement, and then raised her hand.

"Do you suppose, Bertha, the committee will permit me to use one of the grooms in the cup match? You know there is no one who really amounts to anything?" Bertha Hansen, whose sporting instincts were not above taking the cup by default, blinked.

"Why, I—I imagine so. Why don't you inquire, dear? Would it be quite regular?"

"I'm sure I don't know . . . Mr. Nobs, will you have a cab called for me? You might notify the police about the car. No, never mind; I'll attend to that myself."

Natica nodded at her friends, smiled weakly, and abruptly walked away.

"Poor Natica!" Bertha Hansen shrugged. "I'm afraid our tea is all cold."

Wimbledon, more especially that portion of it whose interest centered largely about the Seven Pines Hunt Club and its affairs, was provided with fresh fuel for a situation still brightly burning next day when it became known that Natica's car had been returned to her early in the morning. It had been driven in by a garage attendant from a city some fifty miles distant. What was not known was that the driver also bore a note from Brannigan to Natica.

"You've been bully, Natica Strong," it read. "You took me on faith through-out—trusted me without a question. I have appreciated it, believe me. Thanks for the car. It did seventy-five most of the way—once the speedometer showed eighty. Don't forget me, please. And I assure you your memory will not be put to a long strain." It was signed "Brannigan."

Natica, having read the note, frowned and crumpled it in her fingers. In the act of tossing it into the wastebasket her arm paused halfway. She stood irresolutely. Then she walked to her desk, carefully straightened out the sheet and read it again. She unlocked a private drawer and laid it away.

THE appearance of Brannigan at the Seven Pines polo-field a half-hour before the match for the Armbruster Cup

The Man With a Million Dollar Memory

How Any Man Can Improve His Memory in a Single Evening of Solid Fun

A MAN must have a pretty good memory to have it assessed at a million dollars. And yet this is what I have heard business men say was a small valuation of the memory of one of our big industrial leaders.

The man I refer to is one of the giants of American Business. He is the president of one of the largest corporations in the world and one whose employees run into the hundred thousands.

Ask this man anything about the history of his business—about the details of production in any one of his plants—about the characteristics of his thousands of important employees—or in fact ask him anything you can think of in relation to his business and its complex ramifications, and he comes back with the figures and facts without an instant's hesitation.

All who know this great man—and there is not a man in America who doesn't know him—say that perhaps the greatest factor in his marvelous success is his *memory*.

Memory and Good Judgment

Good judgment is largely a matter of memory. It is easy to make the right decisions if you have *all* the related facts outlined in your mind—clearly and exactly.

Wrong decisions in business are made because the man who makes them forgets some vital facts or figures which, had he been able to summon clearly to mind, would have changed his viewpoint.

The Power of Memory

A man's experience in business is only as old as his memory. The measure of his ability is largely his power to remember at the right time. Two men who have been in a certain business will vary greatly in their experience and value.

If you can remember—clearly and accurately—the solution of every important problem since you first took hold of your work, you can make *all* of your experience count.

If, however, you have not a good memory and cannot recall instantly facts and figures that you learned years ago you cannot make your experience count.

There is no asset in business more important than a good memory. The man referred to at the beginning of this article, whose memory is said to be worth a million

dollars, knows more about his business than any other man in his field because he has been able to remember everything he has ever learned.

Mr. Roth's Amazing Memory Feats

Any man, woman or child of average intelligence can easily and quickly acquire a sure and exact memory.

When David M. Roth, the famous expert, first determined to cultivate his memory he did it because he had a *poor* memory. He actually could not remember a man's name twenty seconds. He forgot so many things that he knew he could not succeed unless he did learn how to remember.

Today there are over ten thousand people in the United States whom Mr. Roth has met at different times—most of them only once—whom he can name instantly on sight. Mr. Roth can, and has, hundreds of times at dinners, and lectures, asked from fifty to one hundred people to tell him their name and telephone numbers, and business connections, and then, after turning his back while they changed seats, has picked each one out by name and told him his telephone number and business.

These are only a few of the scores of other equally "impossible" things that Mr. Roth does—and yet a few years ago he could not remember a man's name twenty seconds. *You too* can do these wonderful things.

A Better Memory in One Evening

Mr. Roth's system, which he has developed through years of study, and which he has taught in class to thousands of business men and others throughout the country in person, is so easy that a twelve-year-old child can learn it, and it is more real fun than any game you play solely for pleasure.

Not only will you enjoy every moment you spend on this wonderful Course but so will your entire family—even the small children can join in the fun.

You get results in the first few moments. Fifteen minutes after you start the first lesson you will see an amazing difference in your power to remember. And a single evening spent on the first lesson will absolutely double your memory power—and may do even more, just as it has for thousands of others.

Just think what this will mean to you—to have twice as good a memory—to have a memory that will enable you instantly to see a new world of facts, figures, faces, addresses, phone numbers, selling points, data and all kinds of mental pictures with less than one hundredth of the effort you now spend in trying to remember without success.

The reason Mr. Roth can guarantee to double your memory in one evening is because he gives you the boiled down, crystallized secret right at the start—then how far you care to go in further multiplying your ability to remember will depend simply on how far you want to go—you can easily and quickly develop your memory to such an extent that you can do everything Mr. Roth can do. He makes the act of remembering an easy, natural, automatic process of the mind.

Try Before You Buy

So confident are the publishers, the Independent Corporation, of the remarkable value of the Roth Memory Course to readers of this magazine that they want you to test out this remarkable system in your own home before you decide to buy. The Course must sell itself to you by actually increasing your memory before you obligate yourself to spend a penny.

Only \$7 If You Keep It

Mr. Roth's fee for personal instruction to classes limited to fifty members is \$1,000, but in order to secure nation-wide distribution for the Roth Memory Mail Course in a single season the publishers have put the price at only \$7. The Course contains the very same material in permanent form that is given in the personal \$1,000 class.

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Don't send a single penny. Merely fill out and mail the coupon. By return post all charges prepaid, the complete Roth Memory Course will be sent to your home.

Study it one evening—more, if you like—then if you feel that you can afford not to keep this great aid to more dollars—to bigger responsibilities—to fullest success in life, mail it back to the publishers within five days and you will owe nothing. If a better memory means only one-tenth as much to you as it has to thousands of other business men and women, mail the coupon today—NOW—but don't put it off and forget—as those who need the Course the very worst are apt to do. Send the coupon in or write a letter now before the low introductory price is withdrawn.



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Frank W. Collier,
The American University,
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Bonnie-B VEIL

IMPORTED FROM FRANCE

"Just Slip it on!"

for mixed fours was to be played was characterized by as little of the dramatic as may be imagined. He motored in by the rear gate, already dressed for the game, a bundle of sticks by his side, and parked the motor in the rear of the little grandstand. He sent an urchin to Natica, who was standing by the mounds of his team in a grove near by. She came to him at once, eying him gravely.

"Somehow, Mr. Brannigan," she said, "I knew you would come. They refused to let me play a groom in your place, and so I had put Chuck Witherbee in, a mere boy. I'm glad to see you."

"Thank you, Miss Strong. I'll do the best I can. I know I have some explanations to give. But we're up to polo now. Explanations can wait."

"Yes." Natica hurried away to announce the change in her combination and met with some opposition, not only from Jack and Bertha Hansen, but from Armbruster himself.

"You're not asking us to play against a crook, Natica!" cried Bertha.

"I'm asking you to play against the team whose names were submitted last Monday. As for Mr. Brannigan, how on earth do you know he's a crook? I think you're horrid. Mr. Armbruster, he plays for the Sandpipers or I'll withdraw my team from the field, and I personally shall resign from the club. Mr. Brannigan's a temporary member in good standing."

"Well—"

Armbruster consulted with the referee, the president of the club and other authoritative persons, the upshot being that the way to prevent Brannigan's playing was not under the rules clearly indicated. The flutter of burning interest among spectators who occupied the stand or sat in motorcars parked about the field developed into genuine excitement when the announcement was made that Natica's strange protégé would be permitted to play. As a matter of fact, he was the first to take the field, and the easy manner in which he tapped the ball along the turf with every variety of stroke proclaimed him to be no novice at the sport which was an absorbing thing for anyone to consider.

The gong rang. The players of the two teams walked their horses to midfield, where the referee was seated on a round mare. Natica glanced covertly at Bertha Hansen as the teams lined up. The young matron's blonde hair flowing from under her cap scintillated in the sunlight. In her heart Natica had almost a jealousy for this young woman, so charming as a hostess, so gifted in many ways. Jack Hansen and Natica were still good friends. But it was a different sort of friendship now. Not for a moment had Natica considered Jack as anything other than an understanding and understandable comrade of the drawing-room and the field. But as it was, it was too big a relation to vanish and not leave a void.

Now he was playing on Bertha's four, where always formerly he had been with her team. A cold despair settled upon the girl. Ownership of this cup had been always the dearest wish of her heart. Yet she felt now that the chances of victory were slim. And after all, what com-



She never knew how close she came to happiness

*Between the lines of his letter
I read the whole unfortunate story*

SOMEWHERE there is a girl who will never know why "Dick" (which is not his real name) suddenly stopped coming to see her—when he so apparently had been quite interested. Perhaps she wonders sometimes what it was—but he could not tell her and she will probably never guess.

He wrote me the story and it made me gladder than ever that we have dared to publish these articles about perspiration, in spite of the sharp comment they have aroused!

She was, he said, a pretty girl and an intelligent one. She knew how to dress and was blessed with personal charm. But—she had overlooked one weakness.

A moment's impression several times repeated and the thing was done. Never again could he think of her quite as he had before.

How many girls, without knowing it, have had a similar experience?

An old fault—common to most of us

It is a physiological fact that there are very few persons who are not subject to this odor of perspiration, though seldom conscious of it themselves. Perspiration under the arms, though more active than elsewhere, does not always produce excessive and noticeable moisture. But the chemicals of the body do cause noticeable odor, more apparent under the arms than in any other place.

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perspiration there even more active. The curve of the arm prevents the rapid evaporation of odor or moisture—and the result is that others become aware of this subtle odor at times when we least suspect it.

How well-groomed men and women are meeting the situation

Well-groomed men and women everywhere are meeting this trying situation with methods that are simple and direct. They have learned that it cannot be neglected any more than any other essential of personal cleanliness. They give it the regular attention that they give to their hair, teeth, or hands. They use Odorono, a toilet lotion specially prepared to correct both perspiration moisture and odor.

Odorono was formulated by a physician who knew that perspiration, because of its peculiar qualities, is beyond the reach of ordinary methods of cleanliness—excessive moisture of the armpits is due to a local weakness.

Odorono is an antiseptic, perfectly harmless. Its regular use gives that absolute assurance of perfect daintiness that women are demanding—that consciousness of perfect grooming so satisfying to men. It really corrects the cause of both the moisture and odor of perspiration.

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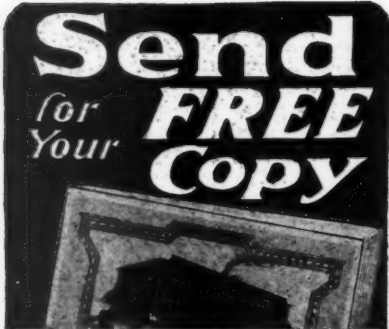
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able object was there in winning? Charlie Jerrod, her Number two, she didn't care for at all. And Brannigan at Number three, was a confidence man, no doubt—or something worse. Nina Pond was all right enough, but was acidulous and unpopular.

The next moment all thoughts save those relating to keen, undying competition vanished as Eric Jameson, the referee, threw the ball to the ground between the two lines of players, and sticks clashed and flank rasped flank as the players fished for the ball. Nina Pond got it and tried to send it out to Brannigan, but Bertha Hansen hooked the woman's stick from the rear.

"Bertha, you beast!"

Percy Snively, playing Number two on Bertha's, the Meadowlarks, had a clean shot and drove the ball to the sideboards. Natica, in the midst of the mêlée, hit the ball. It struck the board and glanced off.

"Natica, girl, get out into the field, don't leave your position that way."

It was Brannigan's voice, sharply emphatic. Jerrod centered the ball so that Hansen could get it. Down field went Jack like a Berserker. But Brannigan was upon him. He hustled him out of his second drive, the ball lying directly in front of the Sandpipers' goal. Natica galloped in to save it and missed an easy shot, leaving the ball free for Bertha Hansen to hit. She sent it through the goal without difficulty.

"All right, Natica. It's only one."

Brannigan swerved his mount outward as the ball was again thrown in by the referee. Ponies milled and sticks flashed for an instant until the ball rolled into the clear, where Hansen picked it up and ramped down field, driving the ball ahead of him. The Sandpipers' mounts—all but Natica's steed club ponies—were tired, not a one of them a match for Jack's horse, which distanced three opposing ponies, leaving the rider free to put the ball through the goal.

TWO goals! Natica could not keep the tears of overwrought emotions from her eyes as they rode in to change ponies after the second period. Brannigan, nonchalant, touched her encouragingly upon the shoulder as he leaped upon his pony and went out upon the field. Ensuing play saw something of a let-down in the Meadowlarks' ardor. They were two goals ahead and a bit fagged from their exertions. Several times the Sandpipers lost opportunities to carry the fight well into Meadowlark territory through failure of the forwards to hit the balls which Brannigan fed to them. Thus encouraged, in the last three minutes of the chukker the Meadowlarks came to life and stormed the Sandpipers' goal three times, scores upon all occasions being saved by some splendid defensive work on the part of Natica—which called from Brannigan shout after shout of approval.

"But Mr. Brannigan," she gasped, "if—if you would only do something. I can see what you are, a superb player; you seem to be playing down to us all, and I—" Her voice broke in a sob. Brannigan flushed but made no reply. The period ended without a score by either side.

Spurred by Natica's lashing voice, the Sandpipers started the third period with a rush. Brannigan immediately after the throw-in got in a drive that made everyone gasp—one of those "international drives" in which the ball rises about fifteen feet in the air and then travels on a line. It rolled on and on well beyond anyone. Natica, yipping like a cowgirl, riding with perfect horsemanship, got down on the ball with Jack Hansen. She sighed a deep sigh as her powerful steed jolted Jack out of the way, and Nina Pond, hair flying, came down at a full gallop and sent the ball through with a pretty drive.

"Two to one!" Natica rose in her stirrups like a Joan of Arc. "Two to one, do you all hear? Now to tie the score!"

As though determined to make good her words, the Sandpipers worried the ball out of the welter at the throw-in and bore it down to the Meadowlarks' goal, where Carrie Vandergrift, playing back for the Larks, made a beautiful save, sending the ball at a perfect angle to Bertha, who went up the field like a being possessed. Natica was at her flank, sitting in her lap, as the saying is. They fought each other like tigers, jamming their ponies together, elbowing, shouldering. They were no longer civilized young women; they were elemental creatures filled with nothing but the fire of conflict. At the final moment Natica crashed so venomously into her opponent that a shot which lay nicely on her forehead was converted into a high-side backhander. Bertha missed it and shrilled her rage. The next minute the bell sounded, ending the chukker. Score still two for the Meadowlarks and one for the Sandpipers.

"Now we'll have our best ponies," cried Natica as the players changed mounts for the fourth and last period. "You'll be on Demon, Mr. Brannigan. Tommy said I could use him."

"Good!" Brannigan turned to the groom and ordered a tightening of the girth. While thus engaged, the other players had lined up; and the referee, having sounded a warning blast upon his whistle, threw the ball in without waiting for Brannigan. Amid a chorus of protesting cries from the Sandpipers, the Meadowlarks got the ball, and Percy Snively without Brannigan to checkmate him, went rollicking down-field with it. Natica managed to save the goal for an instant, but before Brannigan, who came down the field hell for leather, could get into the play, Bertha Hansen made the third goal.

"Do you think that was good sport, Mr. Jameson?" Brannigan's jaws were bulging at the corners as he faced the referee.

"It's the rule, Mr. Brannigan."

"It isn't the rule, is it, Mr. Brannigan?" Natica was raging.

"Yes, it's the rule," Brannigan replied. "But"—he turned to Jack Hansen and eyed him squarely—"it's a rule that benefited him squarely—it's a rule that benefited him by it are prone to offset by sending the ball out of play to the sideboards."

"Do you mean to imply—" But Brannigan raised his hand as Hansen bore toward him.

CARYL FINDS THE KEY

By Alice F. Funken

CARYL shut the front door with a sigh. A glance ahead showed the same dimly-lighted hall that greeted her every night as she returned from work; the narrow stairs disappearing into the inky darkness above; the ancient strip of carpet that led to the mysterious realms of a landlady somewhere on the first floor. It was by no means the rightful home of a fun-loving girl. It wasn't even a good excuse.

Warily climbing the stairs she groped her way along the hall to her room and turned on the light. Its bareness would have appalled one not accustomed to boarding houses. Caryl had become somewhat hardened to the seamy dresser with its grotesque, wobbly mirror; the sagging rocker; and the worn carpet staggering lonesomely across the floor—but the lopsided iron bed had been the bitterest pill of all. Many nights when the mattress bulged and the springs jerked and rattled, and sleep would not come, she lay in the dark staring at the streaks of light flashing across her court window and dreamed of what she would like to have.

Those "like-to-have" dreams were really the only bright spots in Caryl's life. She had no background of romance. She had worked since her fourteenth birthday, at first to support her widowed mother, and then to support herself. In days past she and her mother had lived comfortably on her meager salary. Now, twice the money did not buy half what they had to have. Living conditions were crushing her down. There were only the dreams ahead.

Foremost in these dreams were visions of success in business. Ever since the day she had entered an office as a humble little file clerk, she had wanted to be a "factor" in the commercial world. She had made a few advancements until she had become the sales manager's private stenographer, and there she stopped ascending. No amount of work or increased efforts seemed to bring the reward of greater responsibility and added salary.

Tonight she threw her shabby winter hat and coat across the bed with a feeling akin to despair. Coming home, everything seemed to conspire to remind her that spring would soon be drawing near, spring with its demand for fresh clothes and disdain for the shabby. Last season's garments had been worn threadbare. There would have to be new things this year, but where were they to come from?

The evening would have passed like all the others, and her future would have been exactly what her discouraged mind imagined, were it not for a magazine which she had brought in with her to read before retiring.

It was one of the first really warm spring days when the magic brought by the simple magazine began to work. It was the sort of a morning that makes one thankful just for living.

Caryl on her way to work seemed to have been transported into a new world, a world she had been too careworn and too tired to even see, before.

For Caryl was a very different looking girl this spring morning. The fluffs of hair that danced out in the light breeze were set off by a jaunty hat, and the bunch of violets at her waist rested against a one-piece dress so stunning it took her breath every time she caught a glimpse of herself in a passing window.

There was no office force to gape at her entry, because her work was done in the private office of the sales manager; but as she slipped in through the side door, hung up her hat, and paused a moment to pat her trim collar, she was conscious of the surprised look of her employer. All through the day she felt her watching her, sometimes pensively, sometimes appraisingly. The next day and the next were the same. But Caryl remained serene. Each day found her outfitted in a perfect business costume and very efficient.

One Saturday morning when she entered the office the general manager was talking with her employer. He stopped suddenly as she entered, and left the office.

"Ah—Miss Trenton," he began hesitatingly, "did it ever occur to you that a woman might handle this proposition of ours, as well as men?"

"Indeed it has," Caryl answered quickly. "I know women could succeed with it."

"Well, the Chief seems to feel the same

way. I have persuaded him to let you do the initial work."

"Oh, Mr. Welsh—really?"

The sales manager suggested an interview with the Chief. And the Chief was so impressed with her air of confidence and self-possession, and her business-like attitude, that Caryl was selected first saleswoman.

And so the magic of the magazine worked on silently week after week. When the first tints of summer came along it blossomed out full force. Caryl had made good, and the biggest thing ever offered a woman in the history of the office was offered her. A force of women was to be organized and spread through the territory, and Caryl was to be their chief.

Good secrets are too wonderful to be kept. The magic of the magazine was that kind. The day came at last when Caryl passed the word along that changed another life from failure to success.

A little brown wisp of a girl was the cause—the newest acquisition to the city force. Caryl had been pleased with her fiery enthusiasm, which transformed her small body to a thing of force—but there was something lacking.

One summer afternoon she came into Caryl's office thoroughly discouraged.

"I've tried, Miss Trenton, and—and I simply can't make it go."

Caryl, cool in a fresh linen frock, looked searchingly across at the girl. She took in the warm skirt, the mussed waist, the shabby hat—then she smiled.

"Come home with me tonight," she said, "and I'll show you what's wrong."

Back in the recesses of her delightful apartment that evening she unearthed a strange collection of garments—the ones she had worn before her "transformation."

"That was my best outfit several months ago," she began. "I had just about reached the end. I was sure I had the ability, but I couldn't market it. One is appraised and classed by appearances, in business, quicker than in any other place."

"One evening a simple magazine opened up a wonderful future to me. In that magazine was the story of a girl in just such a position as I was in, who had learned to make attractive, becoming clothes through an institute of domestic arts and sciences which had developed a wonderful new method by which any woman or girl anywhere, could learn to sew right in her own home, in spare time. The Institute provided just the opportunity I needed, so I joined and took up dressmaking."

"I could scarcely wait for my first lesson. But when it came, I realized that any woman could learn dressmaking by this wonderful new plan! The language is so simple a child could understand it, and the pictures are simply wonderful."

"The best part of all is that right away you begin making actual garments. Why, from the third lesson I made a beautiful waist. The course can easily be completed in a few months by studying an hour or two each day. And any woman who is at all interested in clothes couldn't help learning rapidly. The text books foresee and explain everything. And the teachers take such a personal interest in your work!"

"Besides learning how to make every kind of garment at a saving of half or more, I also learned the all-important thing in making clothes—the secret of distinctive dress—what colors and fabrics are most appropriate for different types, how to really develop style and add those little touches that make clothes distinctively becoming."

"The lessons followed each other so naturally that I was soon able to work on elaborate dresses and suits. I learned, too, to copy models I saw in the shop windows, on the streets, or in fashion magazines. In fact, this wonderful method of the Woman's Institute had really made me more capable than most professional dress-



All day long she felt him watching her.

makers—after just a few months of spare-time study at home!

"That's the secret of my success," Caryl concluded simply. "Every stitch of my wardrobe was done by myself and the entire outfit cost less than half what I had paid for my shabby old things."

"And—and you really think I have the same chance that you had?"

"I know it. You have selling ability—what you need is confidence in yourself and nothing will give you that quite so surely as the knowledge that you are correctly dressed. It is the same in business or social affairs—the girl attired in becoming clothes, just the right thing for her particular type, even though they may be simple and inexpensive—is always at ease."

"Your clothes can make or wreck your chances for success. It took me a long, long time to realize it, too. But the lesson was well worth waiting for and I hope you'll profit by my experience. Let the Woman's Institute teach you to make your own clothes. You will soon see that 'looking good and making good' go hand in hand. And I'll buy you the finest eight-course dinner you ever had if your sales haven't doubled in four months!"

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Aunt Belle is a real person and that is her real name. She knows a lot about babies. Why not write to her about your babies?



Baby's Eyes

Dear Anna:

So many mothers seem not to appreciate how sensitive and easily strained are Baby's eyes. Just a little neglect has often impaired an infant's vision for life.

Never let a baby look at pure white. I have seen many bassinets completely draped with white. Always mix in some other soft, neutral shades. Don't you remember how it strained your eyes when you were making bandages during the war? Also, never place baby outdoors so he must look at a white house on which the sun is shining.

I agree with you fully that no one ought to experiment on Baby's skin. There may be talcums as good as Mennen Borated, but I know there are many which are inferior. Mennen's is certainly different—and right.

A Talcum that has held the confidence of mothers, nurses and doctors for over forty years is the kind that I prefer to use on my babies—and on my own skin, too.

Grandma was saying the other day that she used Mennen's, in the familiar blue can, on Mother, who used it on me and I use it on my young ones. Mennen's must be safe to be handed down that way from generation to generation.

Lovingly,
BELLE



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"I am perfectly willing to discuss the point of ethics with you at length after the game. Just now, Hansen, we have a game of polo to finish."

As the referee, with a view to ending the discussion, had galloped to midfield for the throw-in, the players were forced to follow him.

"Never mind." Brannigan, whose narrow gray eyes were set, nodded at Natica, who struck the ball as it hit the ground. It came to Brannigan, who struck it a resounding wallop to the clear side. Swinging as though upon a pivot, he urged Demon after it, talking to the animal in a low voice, never laying the crop upon his side.

Hansen, cutting across, rammed into Demon's flanks, but it was like hitting a wall. Leaning way forward, Brannigan came up in perfect position with the ball on his forehead. There came a sharp click, and the willow sphere described a white streak through the Meadowlarks' goal. It was an amazing drive of over two hundred feet from an angle.

From then on there was no one on the field who had the slightest doubt that Brannigan knew all about polo, and that Demon—purchased by Trafford from Lord Wimborne's string—knew no less. The two were indomitable, veritable flames. The very velocity of Brannigan's whistling drives took heart out of the Meadowlarks, who had no liking at all for that ball which whined over their heads with murderous force.

On one of his drives out of bounds Hansen knocked the ball into play from behind his goal. It was a weak drive; and Brannigan, dashing in on the gallop, met the ball, sending it back toward the Larks' goal. Here Nina Pond made an effort to send it between the posts but struck only a glancing blow. Bertha Hansen hit it full, but the ball struck the flank of her husband's pony. Natica got home a sound stroke, sending the ball to within ten feet of the Meadowlarks' goal. Carrie Vandergrift ramped in to prevent the score. Brannigan was coming to the same point at an angle. At the moment of imminent collision Brannigan swerved his horse aside, giving Carrie the ball.

"After you!" he grinned.

"Thank you, Mr. Brannigan." Carrie Vandergrift smote the ball out of the danger-point.

"That's the time you made him quit, Carrie. Good work!" Snively grimaced at Natica, whose eyes flashed.

"You fool!" she cried.

Meanwhile Jack Hansen made a woeful miss, and Charley Jerrod, to everyone's surprise, hit a neat backhand which rolled to one side near the goal. Brannigan sent it through as cleanly as though he were making a billiard-shot.

"Hurrah! Three to three!" Natica, wiping flecked foam from her lips, shook her stick at each one of the Sandpipers in turn. A silence had settled over the field. Only a short time remained to play, and the issue was in the balance. Hansen got the willow at the throw-in and worked his way clear. Brannigan took the ball away from him and got in a tremendous drive. Nina Pond was on it as it ceased rolling and hit a weak ball at an angle.

Bertha Hansen cut in upon it and sent it upfield, in the center. Jerrod hustled her away and knocked it to Brannigan, who struck it viciously, riding after it like a Cossack. There was not a moment upon the field that could hold Demon. Brannigan came upon the ball un-

lestled.

"Ride for the goal, Natica!" As the girl cut across, the man with a deft stroke so centered the ball that it rolled directly in front of Natica's galloping pony. She didn't try to pull up. It would have been impossible. Breathing a prayer, she launched her drive. The next instant came that ineffable thrill of a clean stroke, the click of wood against wood, loud and clear, the ball shooting between the posts like a streak of light.

"Four to three! Glory!" Natica glanced at Brannigan. Then her pony fell before his keen half mocking glance.

THE bell rang, ending the game a half minute after the next throw-in. And Natica, pulling up her pony, raised her face.

She glanced about hastily. Brannigan was cantering toward the side of the field. Putting her mount to full gallop, the girl came up to him.

"Mr. Brannigan! You don't get away from me in that manner. I don't care who you are. I don't care what you are. I—I—"

The man put out his hand, leaning toward her when Eric Jameson, the referee, came up.

"You're wanted by the grandstand, Mr. Brannigan."

"Oh, Lord. Well—" Brannigan straightened in his saddle and smilingly stepped his horse across the boundary board.

Here stood the two stout legal-appearing men whom Natica remembered to have seen at the club upon a momentous occasion, and between them was her uncle. Stephen Strong was quivering with agitation.

"Are you—are you the man these men want?" he cried hoarsely.

"Why, yes, I think I am," Brannigan smiled engagingly.

"Then you're—you're—"

"Yes, quite so. I am, Mr. Strong." He turned to Natica, raising his voice. "I think you are all entitled to a bit of an explanation. I happen to be the immediate president of the Regal Aluminum Products Corporation. A clique in the directorate issued a writ of mandamus sometime ago compelling me to attend a meeting of the Board and give reasons why the quarterly dividend was to be passed. I could not give those reasons without injuring us in an important merger now in process—"

"Then you mean—" Natica's eyes were blazing.

"I mean that when I was advised of the existence of the mandamus, I sought asylum of Tommy Trafford, who was kind enough to let me hide here."

"But why didn't you tell me, at least?" Natica had moved close to the man, staring at him with widening eyes, her lips parted.

"Because, my dear lady, your Uncle Stephen was—"

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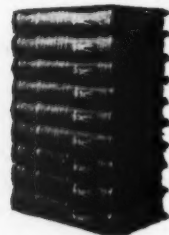
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"Yah!" Stephen Strong struggled for speech. "I was the leader of that clique in the board of directors. I knew his father; I had never had the fortune of meeting the son—at least," he corrected, "to know him."

Brannigan's voice came to Natica out of the outburst of laughter.

"That fact saved me. I didn't realize about your uncle until you took me to your home. Then I had to bluff it out with him—and with you. If you'll permit me this evening, Mr. Strong, I'll explain everything about that dividend. I'm sure you will be more than satisfied. —As for you," — He turned to the two process-servers, — "I'll take the summons, if you wish. I suppose you should know, however, that it will do no good. The directors' meeting, as Mr. Strong knows, was held yesterday."

"I know it was, you rascal!" Stephen Strong laughed. "But look here, Mr. Cheltenham—"

"Cheltenham!" Jack Hansen came forward. "You're not Jim Cheltenham, the Meadowbrook back, who has been crowding Devereux Milburn all spring?"

"Something like that, Hansen—except the crowding of Devereux Milburn."

"By George, Cheltenham—" But Hansen ceased speaking as the man raised an admonitory hand.

"Forget it, please. It's all right."

—Natica, will you motor over to the club with me? I want to talk to you."

In silence the two made their way through the knot of club folk to Cheltenham's car.

"But you're not driving straight to the club." The girl placed a tentative hand upon the wheel as the man swung toward a country road.

"In just a minute," he said. "We'll well sweated. We sha'n't take cold."

"Where in the world—"

Suddenly he stopped the car at the end of a wooded road, giving upon a beautiful expanse of rolling hills and meadowland, steeped in the heavy pall of the late June day.

"Do you remember, Natica, when we took that first ride? We stopped on horses here."

"Oh—oh, yes." The girl, who had been gazing at him wonderingly, smiled. "I recall that you said it would be a delightful place for a country house—so much better than the Long Island country."

"What else did I say?"

"You said—you—you— Why, nothing."

"What else did I say, Natica?"

"Why, you said that if ever you found—a girl—" She ceased suddenly, placing her hands over her face.

Gently he pulled them away. Their eyes met. Both were smiling.

DAUGHTER OF DISCONTENT

(Continued from page 67)

and harvest-hands and other laborers will seize the Coast. The police will be with us. We shall seize banks, railroads, food, arms. It will be as peaceful as possible—and we shall succeed. But the body of the people, the bourgeoisie, your so-called middle classes, are not with us as we wish. We know what will arouse them." He stopped a moment and then said impressively: "Hungary!"

Abner Islip sat without movement.

"You can control the meals of the country—almost of the world," said Ogus.

"I will give you a million dollars," said Islip.

Ogus smiled. "A million dollars—when we can sack a continent!"

"Two millions," said Islip.

"Not ten nor twenty millions. We have one price, control of Abner Islip, control of the food of the world, to do with it as we see fit—to starve this city, to ration that city, to arouse the people to fury—the fury born of starvation."

Islip moved his eyes for the first time and looked steadily at his son. He thought aloud: "Revolution and anarchy—the Government destroyed—everything destroyed that America has created in a century. The mob in power—to sack and burn and kill. It is impossible."

"It is possible. A revolution was impossible in Russia. It came. Remember the French Revolution—the Commune. Look at Germany—at Hungary. It is not only possible; it is certain. Your returned soldiers—do you think they will fight for you?"

Cleghorn turned his head slowly and looked at Ogus.

"No," said Abner Islip.

"You refuse?"

"Yes."

"Remember, it is not only that your son will be hanged—hanged by the neck until he is dead; but you are one of the strong men of the country—who will not be alive on that day to organize against us."

"You have weakened your argument," said Abner Islip.

"What?"

"What I might do for my son I would not do to save myself."

"Take time to think."

"I have thought."

"You refuse."

"Yes."

Cleghorn moaned.

"You have thought that your son—this boy—will go from your office to a cell? He will be tried for murder, and his guilt spread over the face of the world to disgrace you. Have you pictured him in the death-house—waiting for the dawn? Have you pictured that? Have you seen him walk into the prison yard between his guards and mount the scaffold? His arms strapped to his sides, his feet tied! They will pull a black cap over his eyes. Your son—that boy—there! They will put a noose around his neck and stand him on the trap. . . . Have you thought of it all? Can you see your son standing on that trap—see him drop suddenly to the end of a rope and dangle there? A hanging is not a pretty sight. . . . Think it over."

DU PONT

Ivory Pyralin



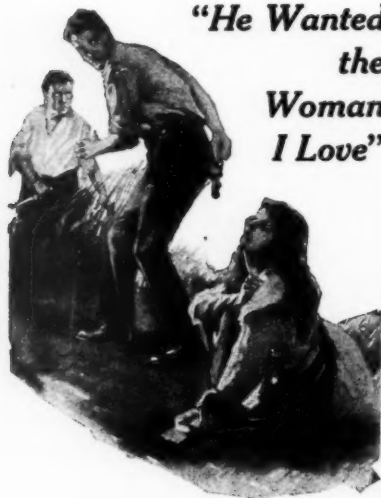
The La Belle Pattern
featuring the transverse
handle, exclusive with
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Gives life-long service—

AT FIRST glance, one is captivated by the beauty of Ivory Pyralin. In design it is flawless, its color is the mellow lustre of old ivory, its delicate grain is exquisite. And its usefulness is remarkable.

But only after long service can the other qualities of Ivory Pyralin be fully appreciated. It cannot tarnish, nor chip, nor break. It is easily cleaned. It has practically indefinite life. It is unquestionably the ideal toiletware.

Genuine Ivory Pyralin can be identified by the name in tiny letters on each piece. In complete sets, or single articles. At the leading stores.



"He Wanted the Woman I Love"

"I heard a shot—I saw him run—and then I saw her fall—the woman I loved. My leg was broken—and my gun was gone! I had only one thought—his strange, astounding plots must be avenged—he must die for a coward at my hand! He had the courage of a lion and the cunning of a rat. He came running toward me, when, suddenly—I— But the story is too thrilling—too fascinating, as he tells it, for us to spoil it for you here—for it is told by the man who knows how to make a story the most breathless thing in the world.

Robert Louis STEVENSON

He makes it so real that we forget everything about us in the joy of it. He is the man whose soul wouldn't grow up for the tiresome things of this old world. It stayed always young, having the most splendid adventures. He takes us with him in his stories; he makes us, too, forget that we have grown up!

But it was America who first discovered him—America who proclaimed him! That was because his spirit was the kind to thrill every true American—because he has put that spirit into his books, because they fascinate the gentlest woman and the bravest man alike, and to-day Americans love him best of all. They read him more than they ever did before.

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Cleghorn stared at his father, his lips parted, his eyes wide, his face gray as death. Abner Islip did not look at him. "No," he said.

Ogus shrugged his shoulders and nodded to Borginski, who pushed Cleghorn toward the door. Islip did not speak; no one spoke. The boy reached the door, turned and looked again at his father with horror in his eyes.

ABNER ISLIP sat still. Last night's conversation with his son returned to him. What had he said then? He had told the boy to come to him, no matter what his trouble, and he would find help. He had promised his son that even should he be guilty of murder, his father would save him. And now his son was there, had come to him to be saved—and the father was sending him away to his death! He loved his son; such men as Abner Islip love fiercely, with the depth and the power of the sea. What was his country to his son? What was all the world?

"Cleghorn—Cleghorn! Come back." It was a cry from his soul.

Ogus paused. "Well?" he said.

Abner Islip's face was no longer a mask. He no longer sat like a man of granite. He was human, a father, weak with the weakness of humanity, trembling with the fear to which humanity is heir.

"Give—me—my—son!" he said.

He bowed his head and sheltered his face in his quivering hands.

"You surrender?" said Ogus.

"Anything—everything. Give me my son."

"You will not back out? You give us control of this business—to use it as we plan?"

"Yes—yes!"

"You will obey?"

"Yes."

Cleghorn took a step forward, two steps. He was at his father's side, his arms about his father's shoulders. He was saved. His father had saved him! His father had done this thing for him, had redeemed his promise! *At what cost?*

A phrase ran through his head: "Your returned soldiers won't fight for you?" He was a returned soldier. He had fought; he had faced death. For what? In that instant he saw a vision of the thing he had fought for, saw a vision of the thing these men were plotting to bring about, which his salvation would bring about. He saw confusion, crime, horrors loosed upon the land for which he had fought, for which he had volunteered to die if necessary—saw disaster facing that country worse than the disaster of a German victory. And he had been willing to die to prevent a German victory.

He had been pale, trembling, compliant. His shoulders had sagged; he had been an object to pity and to jeer. Now he stood erect beside his father, rested one hand on his father's shoulder and faced Peter Ogus and his friends.

"They will fight," he said unsteadily. "They would have died, and they will die again. You lied!" There was a pause between those words and his next. "Father," he said, "I did not tell you

the truth: I killed Anna Clotta. I am going to give myself up to the police."

There was silence.

Abner Islip lifted his head and stared into his son's face. Cleghorn pressed his shoulder—and could smile, weakly but with courage. Ogus sneered, but even as he sneered, he wet his lips uneasily. Keenan showed his white teeth. Borginski, slow of thought, failed to comprehend the significance of Cleghorn's words, was unable to see in them the disaster to their plan. If Cleghorn made his words good and confessed, there was no hold on Abner Islip. Worse than that, there was no hostage to keep them safe against Ogus' open disclosure of the huge plot to destroy America!

"Son!" said Abner Islip, grasping Cleghorn's coat as if to detain him by force.

The boy was simple in this moment of his soul's salvation. There were no heroics. He had no words such as the Gascon *d'Artagnan* or the noble-hearted *Athos* might have uttered.

"It's all right, Dad," he said.

"Bluff!" sneered Ogus.

Cleghorn lifted the telephone-receiver from the hook. "Get me police headquarters," he said.

"Bluff," repeated Ogus, but he clenched a fold of his coat in white-knuckled fingers.

"Headquarters?" It was Cleghorn speaking over the telephone. "The Chief please. This is Cleghorn Islip, sir. I am on my way to headquarters to give myself up—to give myself up. Yes sir—for killing a girl named Anna Clotta. Yes, Abner Islip's son. I am on my way. Good-by, sir."

He hung up the receiver carefully and spoke to Ogus. Somehow he was calm now, master of himself. He did not seem a boy, a careless, pleasure-seeking boy. He was not without dignity.

"I wish you would go now," he said. "I want to say good-by to my father."

In that moment neither Abner Islip nor Cleghorn thought of their duty to apprehend these men, to give them over to justice. For them there were but two people in the world—themselves. Ogus moved toward the door, backing slowly. Borginski and Keenan followed. The door closed after them.

"Good-by, Dad," said Cleghorn, extending his hand.

His father took it, clung to it, searching his son's face for the truth.

"Tell me the truth. Did you kill that girl?"

"I killed her."

"Son, that is not the truth."

"I killed her."

Islip did not release his son's hand nor remove his gaze from his son's face. It was a moment before he spoke.

"You are right, my son. You killed her. All the world must know you killed her—all the world but me. May I go with you, Cleghorn?"

"No, Dad. There is one place I want to go before—it is impossible."

"A good-by?"

"Yes."

"A woman?"

"Yes."

"You love her?"

"Yes." (Continued on page 143)

Are Car Owners too Easily Satisfied with their Tires



If the front tire of the car at the left should blow out several days after striking this stone at speed, its owner would probably be at a loss to know what caused it.

What often happens in a case like this is that the inner plies of cord or fabric are ruptured, leaving the tire ripe for a complete breakdown, if not immediately attended to.

The safest way to avoid all such contingencies is to keep a sharp watch on the road at all times.

IN every community of any size there are two types of tire dealers—one who encourages his customers in their search for the best and one who tries to persuade them to be satisfied with what they have.

The first man is selling a service; the second, tires.

There are still too many motorists who meekly accept the blame for a tire that has worn out before its time.

They will listen while the dealer tells them of all the varying conditions that a tire has to undergo.

They will agree when he pictures them as lucky they got what they did out of a tire.

Not one motorist in five has yet found out what a tire is really capable of—how much he really has a right to expect from his tires.

The great mass of motorists in this country are just beginning to wake up to the fact that you can't encourage waste and have economy at the same time.

They are beginning to find out for themselves what makes for economy in tires.

And they are going to the dealer who not only sells good tires to the man who insists upon them,

but who refuses to have anything but good tires in his store.

* * *

From the beginning the whole weight of the United States Rubber Company—the largest rubber manufacturing concern in the world—has been thrown on the side of the good dealer.

Backing him first and last with all of its great and varied resources—greater and more far-reaching than those of any concern in the business.

And looking forward with confidence to the time when motorists everywhere will insist upon a higher standard of tire service.

United States Tires

United States Rubber Company



Fifty-three
Factories

The oldest and largest
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Two hundred and
thirty-five Branches

—tempting lemon tang
Ward's
LEMON-CRUSH



THE drinks the youngsters dream about—Orange Crush and Lemon-Crush. Mothers need not hesitate to give their little ones all they want, because these drinks are the very essence of purity and quality.

Orange-Crush and Lemon-Crush are famous for their rare delicacy of flavor. There is satisfaction in knowing that this extra deliciousness comes from the fragrant oils pressed from freshly-picked oranges and lemons, purest granulated sugar and citric acid (the natural acid of oranges and lemons).

Keep a case in the home. Serve at meals and between meals.

-like oranges? Drink
ORANGE-CRUSH



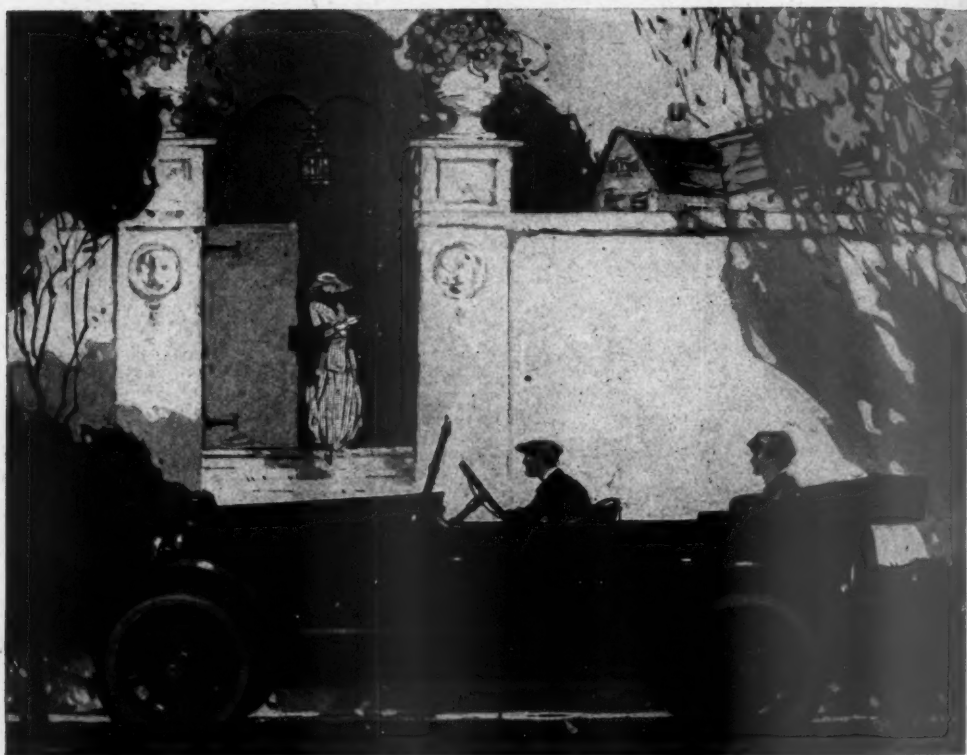
AND for grown-up youngsters, too, these are the favorite drinks. Fine for outdoor folks. The game over—then a quick, sure putt to a long, cold drink of Orange-Crush! Good? You bet it is!

There are few golf clubs in which these drinks are not the favorites at the "19th hole." Extra excellence and delicious flavor have won this tribute. Golfers drink only the best.

in bottles or at fountains

Prepared by Orange-Crush Co., Chicago
Laboratory: Los Angeles

Send for free book, "The Story of Orange-Crush and Lemon-Crush"



FOR THREE YEARS CHALMERS HAS LED ALL MOTOR CAR DESIGN WITH ITS HOT SPOT AND RAM'S-HORN

THE public the country over now accepts Hot Spot and Ram's-horn, and in accepting them the public pays Chalmers a nation-wide tribute. For when the great American jury endorses a principle it means other makers must follow that principle.

In this way Chalmers has been awarded an engineering leadership.

Just what Hot Spot and Ram's-horn accomplish and how they do it has been told many times, but no other maker has yet found a way to improve upon them.

Hot Spot vaporizes the raw, heavy, inferior gasoline of the day into a "fine cloud."

Ram's-horn rushes it at a velocity of 100 miles through "easy air bends" to each cylinder, equidistant from Hot Spot.

One without the other would be ineffective. Playing together they lift Chalmers to a high peak of efficiency.

The reward has been the ever growing opinion of the public that Chalmers is one of the few great cars of the world.



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CHALMERS

With HOT SPOT & RAM'S-HORN

"She loves you?"
 "No."
 "Is she good?"
 "Too good for me."
 "Tell me her name."
 "Ruth Deyo. Chagnon can tell you."
 Now good-by, Dad."
 "Son, when you were—little, you used to kiss me good-by. It has been a long time."

Cleghorn bent over and kissed his father simply, as a child might have done—and walked rapidly from the office.

AN hour later Finney Chagnon entered the room. Abner Islip sat in the same position, hands outstretched on the desk before him, with eyes that saw nothing material, but which beheld many things immaterial.

"Mr. Islip!" exclaimed Chagnon, startled at his employer's expression.

"Chagnon. My son Cleghorn—you know he has troubled me. I have worried over him."

"Yes sir."

"Will you remember this? It may seem strange to you, presently, Chagnon, but—I am well satisfied with my son."

CHAPTER XXVIII

JANE LANG'S mental processes stopped at a certain point and could not move therefrom—force meeting an obstacle which it could neither pierce nor overthrow. She could not think over it or through it or around it. Indeed, she scarcely thought at all, but rather stood arrested, looking at a picture; and that picture was of neat piles of containers, each an abhorrent mechanism constructed for the vile uses of treacherous murder. She was aware of them as if some die had stamped the image on her mind, and stamping had obliterated all else. One can feel without thinking. Jane's emotional reaction was not one of physical fear, but of cold dread that pawed her soul with dead fingers—not dread of consequences, but dread of the thing itself.

The first active thought that came was the natural working of the law of self-preservation. She had discovered this unwholesome secret. What would be the consequences to her if her discovery were discovered? It was one of those secrets which one may not be permitted to penetrate and live.

Her thoughts were chaotic; one followed another now without sequence. Who and where were the men, women and children destined to open those containers—whose deaths were fastened inside those little pasteboard receptacles? Scores, hundreds! It must be stopped; that slaughter must be prevented. She must prevent it.

But if she prevented it, she betrayed her father! She was suffering this voluntary imprisonment to hold him secure against the consequences of crime already committed. Even if one's father be a murderer, plotting other murders, one does not denounce him without travail, without hesitation—if one denounces him at all.

Her mind had reached this point when

her door opened without the preliminary of a knock, and Mrs. Clotts entered. The woman stood just within the door, very thin, quaintly rigid, with her preternaturally bright eyes glowing unwaveringly.

"You have walked about the house," she said. "When nobody is here, you have walked."

"Yes."

"In all the rooms you walked—up the stairs, into my husband's room you walked. The door that is never open was open when I come home. You have been there."

Jane did not answer.

Mrs. Clotts nodded her head with the stiff motion of an automaton. "You saw in that room. Yes. In the closet you saw. Women look in closets."

Still Jane could make no reply.

"You should be locked in this room now, until I know what is to do. I shall tell him, and then we will see."

Again she nodded her head jerkily, deftly removed the key from the inner side of the door, shut the door softly and locked it after her. Jane was no longer a voluntary prisoner.

In sudden terror she flung herself against the door; she tore at the knob, struggled with the door as if with a sentient antagonist. She clung to the knob and leaned against the door for support, her knees trembling beneath her. She was caught! She had not the strength to make that door open before her. Presently she dragged herself to the window and raised it. There was a drop of twenty feet to a concrete-paved courtyard, a mere air-shaft from which was no exit. Then she knew despair!

She sat on the edge of her bed, numb, hopeless, aware of her helplessness to do anything but await what might come. Hours went by—hours of nightmare-solitude. She was not hungry, though the noon-hour came and went, though the dinner-hour was left behind and darkness fell. No one summoned her or brought her food. The house was silent, terrifyingly silent. Through the night she dozed and awakened, dreamed horribly, to be awakened by her own cries. Morning came, and daylight. Though weary, weak, she found some comfort in the day. It gave her energy to struggle again with the door, to calculate the chances of escape by the window—to endeavor to make some plan.

Strangely—but the human soul is made up of strange and contradictory elements moving in manners strange and contradictory—she felt a necessity to escape, not for the sake of the body of Jane Lang, but to whisper into ears of authority the secret of that attic room of Henry Clotts. It was a thing that *had to be*. Herself was not considered; her father was negligible; all that remained was that irresistible demand that she become free to tell—to tell—and telling to save those threatened innocent lives. For Jane the whole world was stripped of inessentials, bared to the *essential*.

It was eleven o'clock. Jane heard a distant bell announce the hour. She pounded on the door, called. But Henry Clotts was in his attic; Mrs. Clotts was descending the basement stairs to the sordid meeting-room behind the book-

shop. Peter Ogus, Keenan and Borginski had just arrived from their hour in Abner Islip's office with Abner and his son—and Borginski had shouted for beer. "Three," said Mrs. Clotts, numbering the men.

"Hurry," said Borginski.

THE three slumped into chairs and gazed at each other. It was a time for scheming, for quick action—for hiding, and for saving a plot betrayed by themselves.

"I would speak to you," Mrs. Clotts said to Ogus. "You should come."

He followed her up the stairs.

"The girl—she walk around the house—into the attic room. She look in the closet."

"She saw the—"

"She saw all—she knows. I have lock' her in her room since yesterday. You must say what to do."

"Give me the key."

She handed him the key, and he bounded up the stairs. She followed slowly, but did not stop to enter Jane Lang's room with Ogus. Instead she walked on to the attic stairs and climbed stiffly up to her husband's room. Henry Clotts was humming at his work. His wife scrutinized the bottles on shelves above his head, and standing on a chair, reached one of them and scrutinized its label. She had not spoken.

"What you have there?" asked Henry Clotts. He recognized the bottle. "What do you do with that?"

"You should mind your business," she said, and walked to the door with her stiff, prim walk, her face emotionless, but her eyes very bright.

It was her custom to carry beer to the meeting-room in bottles. This time she opened the bottles and poured the beer into glasses. Into two of the glasses she poured a few drops from the little bottle. Then, careful to spill no portion on her shining floors, she carried the tray below.

"Here iss beer," she said, placing a glass before Keenan, a second glass before Borginski. Then she turned and walked to the stairs, but paused there—paused to see Borginski raise his glass to his lips. Having seen, she slowly climbed the stairs, wiped the tray and replaced it carefully. After this she took a dust-cloth and went methodically about the removal of what particles of dust might have settled in the small parlor since the morning before.

On the floor above, Peter Ogus confronted Jane Lang. He had unlocked the door and entered without ceremony, closing it behind him and standing with his back against its panels.

"You have been very foolish," he said.

JANE stood up—a natural reaction. Her arms were straight and tense at her sides, her fists clenched. She was striving for control, to hold her senses to clearness and keenness, for so alone she saw some chance for self-preservation. She did not reply to Ogus.

"The cursed curiosity of women!" he said harshly. "At the first opportunity you must snoop! Now you'll have to take the consequences."

"What—consequences?"



Above are photographs of a woman who has traveled alone through Asia, of a woman who runs a large cosmetic manufactory, and of a woman who writes and stages plays.

Women Who Succeed

FOR women who succeed in business and the professions the rewards are today much greater than ever before. In money, in social status, in opportunity for enjoyable leisure and for travel, the successful business woman is paid well indeed. Many women are achieving these desirable things; and the stories of their careers are not only interesting for their own sake but for the suggestions they offer to other ambitious women. The Green Book has come to be known for the many biographies of this type which it publishes. In the current September issue, for example, you will find:

The story of a woman who began as a stenographer at ten dollars a week. Now she earns ten thousand a year in the advertising business.

The story of a woman who wrote little comedies of every-day life and has put herself and her family on the stage very profitably.

The story of one of America's most distinguished artists, a woman who has won a high place as a painter of children's portraits.

The story of a woman who capitalized her knowledge of chemistry, worked out valuable formulae for toilet preparations and built up a big business.

The story of a woman who started as cashier in a meat market and is now a successful stock-broker.

The story of a woman whose hotel has built up a whole town and made her known throughout the state.

Besides these intimate and revealing fact-stories the September Green Book offers you an unusual article on the fur business by Agnes Laut; a striking presentation of the motherhood problem for employed women; and—besides other notable articles—delightful novels and short stories by George Gibbs, Berta Ruck, Phyllis Duganne, Henry Payson Dowst, Jeanne Judson and others. All in the September issue of—

The Green Book Magazine

Photograph by Wm. Dobkins

Photograph by Norman F. Butler



Above are photographs of a successful woman broker, of a distinguished painter and a woman whose business supports a whole town.

He stood looking at her, and as he looked, Jane noted a change in the light of his eye. It had been a smolder; it became a glitter. Her beauty had called up that glitter, and she recognized it for she had seen it before. He wet his lips. He had been all revolutionist; in her presence he was becoming all man. Jane snatched at this knowledge. It was a fair weapon of her sex, a weapon her sex had used for fair purposes and for foul, from the dawn of time. She smiled wanly, tremulously, appealing. It demanded resolution, but she was capable of it. She knew how her face looked wearing that smile.

"You wouldn't—hurt me?" she said.

Ogus wet his lips again; his fingers opened and shut; he took a step forward.

"You went into that room—you saw," he said; and his voice was unsteady.

Jane was in deathly fear. She shut her eyes an instant and swayed. She must command herself, must be wary, keen, to outwit this man—by some means to escape from that house to tell—to tell, and save those innocent lives.

"I've been frightened. That woman locked me in. I haven't had—even a drink of water—since last night."

"You saw what was in Clott's cupboard?"

"Yes. But I didn't mean to. It made me afraid." She was acting, playing a part for life or death. It was well done. Somehow she seemed smaller, more defenseless, clinging—very lovely.

"We can't let you go away—with what you know."

"If—I promised not to tell?"

Ogus laughed. Jane lifted her hand appealingly. The sight of her quickened Ogus' breath; she went to his head. If ever opportunity came to a man, here was his. "Your mouth has got to be kept shut. No chance—we can't take a chance. We've got to shut your mouth."

Jane smiled again—not provokingly, but the smile was close to the borderland of provocation. "You didn't tell the truth. You said you—loved me. If that was true, you wouldn't threaten me and frighten me."

"Love you? Love you! I do love you. I want you." He stepped toward her again, and she retreated a step, by sheer will preventing the repulsion she felt from showing in her face. "But I can't leave you to talk. I'm going away. I've got to go away for a while. If you'll come with me—if you'll come . . ."

"Go with you! You mean—" She drew back another step.

"I mean anything you like—if you'll come. Now—I've told you. I have money, lots of it. We'll go to New York, and we can be married there."

"You don't know what you're saying." Her voice carried no sting; she had seen her way now—if she could compel this man to her will. Any lie, any deceit would be virtue if it would lure Ogus to take her where she could speak and be heard—and believed. "Go with you to New York—and then be married! . . ."

"You mean?"

"I don't mean anything," she said placidly.

"Do you mean you would marry me—now, and then go with me?"

"You haven't asked me?"

He was almost close enough to touch her now. For an instant she weighed the possibility of avoiding him, of reaching the door first and of fleeing from the house, but the chances were too great. Ogu8 tried to seize her in his arms, but she avoided him, smiling this time. "Not yet," she said.

"Will you marry me today—now? On our way to the train?"

"I—I don't trust you."

"What can I do? What do you want me to do?"

She seemed to hesitate. "If you'll take me—to a minister I know—so I will be sure. If you'll do that—go to a man I know, now, then I'll marry you—and go with you."

His face was flushed; he was intoxicated by her beauty. She avoided him, tantalized him, maddened him.

"You'll marry me?"

"I'll marry you," she said clearly, distinctly.

As the words passed her lips, she started forward, uttered a cry. The bedroom door was thrust open violently. There stood Weeks Ledyard and a companion. He was looking into her eyes, and she into his. She saw there amazement, amazement at her presence in the room which faded into something else, something bitter, scornful, hurt. She knew he had heard her promise to Ogu8.

"Oh!" she cried.

Ledyard did not look at her again. "That's Ogu8," he said to his companion. They stepped into the room. Ledyard's companion was silent, businesslike. He secured his prisoner.

"Ogu8," he said grimly, "was that your work—downstairs?"

"Downstairs? What work?" Ogu8 was defiant.

"There are two dead men in your little room—Keenan and Borginski—Dead with a glass of beer in front of each of them." He turned to Ledyard. "This young woman—where does she come in?"

"I don't know," Weeks said. "She will have to come. Miss Lang, you will have to come with us."

"Wait—wait! You don't know. Upstairs—in the attic! In Mr. Clotts' cupboard. It's full of bombs. I saw them."

Weeks nodded. "Porter," he said, "you and your men will have your hands full with Ogu8 and Clotts and his wife. May I take Miss Lang—in a taxi?" It seemed difficult for him to speak.

"Where?" she asked breathlessly.

"It would—be a favor if she were not—humiliated," said Ledyard.

"You will be answerable for her?"

"Yes."

The officer nodded.

"If—you will come with me, Miss Lang, I—will save you all the unpleasantness I can." Ledyard did not look at her as he spoke.

Mechanically, with a curious feeling of numbness in limbs and brain, as if these events concerned some other and inconsiderable person, Jane prepared for the street. Ledyard stood aside for her to pass through the door, and followed her down the stairs.

The conclusion of Mr. Kelland's memorable novel will appear in the forthcoming October issue of The Red Book Magazine.

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UP IN

(Continued)

of an ellipse, and she shot skyward more like a rocket. The pilot grimly sacrificed the ease of mind of his passengers. His one hope was to shake the nerves of the threatening individual on his side. If only he dared loop! He speculated for a moment on the strength of the roof above the saloon. Would it bear the weight of nine men suddenly flung upon it? He could not risk it.

The face of the man at his side came suddenly into close contact with his own, its mouth distorted in a full-lunged shout. He just caught the words: "Quit joshing!" A left hand clutched at the wheel and the right hand once more brought the pistol into dangerous proximity. He flattened out their soaring, full-engined, skyward rush at a couple of thousand feet.

"Down!" shouted the just heard voice. "Down!"

Under the menace of that pistol he dropped her on a steady slant to a thousand, flattened out again at a sign from the man at his side. His one chance, it was obvious to him, was to assume an implicit obedience, ready in the meanwhile to snatch any opportunity of escape that might present itself.

BOTH men glanced over the side to the sea below. The small craft was close under them, now clearly defined as a swift motorboat of considerable size. The man in the left-hand seat, still covering the pilot with his weapon, pulled out a Very pistol with his left hand and fired into the air. A star of intense white light shone out suddenly against the blue sunlit sky and sank downward. An answering rocket shot up from the motorboat, which swerved round to follow them.

The pilot obeyed a tug on his arm that commanded him to circle. His captor looked away from him over the side in an evident computation of distances. The pistol in his right hand, no longer controlled by direct vision of its possible target, waved vaguely at a harmless angle. It was the momentary chance. Abandoning the wheel with his right hand, the pilot reached over in a sudden movement, snatched the weapon and flung it wide overboard.

Then, before his adversary could realize what had happened, he put the machine up on a long, full-powered slant to the southeast, away from the boat below.

A second later a couple of hands were round his throat, choking the life out of him. Suffocating, in an agony of reaction against this throttling grip, one hand tearing vainly at those which constricted him remorselessly, he fought to keep his consciousness, to keep the machine with his one free hand on the upward course whose correctness he, with his head pushed back out of vision of the dashboard, could only determine with the sixth sense of long custom in the air. The machine banked, sideslipped dangerously, and still that grip upon his throat continued unrelaxed. In a flash of the

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THE AIR

(from page 57)

tuition, he understood his adversary's game; he would let her fall into the sea, certain himself of being rescued with his loot—no matter what had happened in the saloon behind—by the motorboat evidently at a rendezvous. The pilot, feeling his heart swell to bursting in his suffocated breast, tugged blindly and desperately at the controls with both hands, felt the machine right herself once more.

Then, entirely abandoning the wheel for a moment, his head singing in a whirl of the senses, he made a supreme effort to rid himself of his adversary's grip, half-rising in blind reaction from his seat. The machine, uncontrolled, dived suddenly seaward in an awful spin. The pilot, on the verge of fainting, felt her go—felt that the end had come. His hands drooped powerless to fumble for the controls.

Suddenly, incredibly, the pressure on his throat ceased. In his first long full breath of delicious new life, he glanced round with eyes that ached from their sockets, while an automatic self seized possession of the controls, struggled desperately to pull the machine out of this fatal, giddy spin. What had happened? Intent, in the urgency of the brief moment or two that separated them from a headlong plunge into the sea, upon a task that demanded all his skill, he only half-glimpsed that it was now his adversary who leaned back, gasping, choking, garrotted from behind.

Thompson? The thought flashed through his mind as, a few feet only above waves that lifted themselves in a run of mobile water where sky had been, the machine suddenly flattened herself into a level course, shot up once more in answer to his tug at the wheel-topped lever. The motorboat appeared, startlingly close, issuing from under her in a smother of flying foam, oilskin-clad men waving frantically from her hooded deck in expostulation at this threatened crash upon them.

Thompson? He glanced again. No. He saw a horribly mangled hand, black with an explosion and with congealed blood, stretch itself forward from behind, grope over the face of the choking man. He glanced round still farther, saw that a handkerchief was tightly round the throat of his late adversary, saw that its ends were being drawn back with all the strength of a strange man who thrust his knee into his victim's back and grinned with a horrible exultation of gluttony and hatred.

The throttled man went over backward suddenly.

PRIOR to that first rushing nose-dive, before there was anything to indicate any abnormality in the control of the machine, the passengers in the saloon, left with the man who had taken possession of the suitcase, were too absorbed in the fascination of watching his preparations for disposing of it to notice that its late owner, still apparently in a swoon,

When the Rattlesnake Struck



Judge!

When you sent me up for four years, you called me a rattlesnake. Maybe I am one—anyhow, you hear me rattling now. One year after I got to the pen, my daughter died of—well they said it was poverty and the disgrace together. You've got a daughter, Judge, and I'm going to make you know how it feels to lose one. I'm free now and I guess I've turned to rattlesnake all right. Look out when I strike.

Yours respectfully,

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was watching also through half-opened eyes. His pistol ostentatiously in readiness on his confederate's chair, the quietly self-possessed brigand occupied himself with attaching two large India-rubber bladders to the suitcase and then inflating them. This done, he produced what was evidently a silken parachute, still closed, and tied it firmly to the handle. Those watching passengers, still too frightened to move, had no difficulty in deducing his intentions. Obviously he was going to drop the suitcase overboard.

Then came the nose-dive which sent them all tumbling out of their chairs into a heap upon the floor. The thief, bent over the suitcase, went first, too suddenly surprised to have a chance of retaining his equilibrium. As he sprawled, the man hitherto sunk back in his chair hurled himself upon him, went down with

him, his hand groping for the pistol. He seized it by the barrel, struck viciously with the butt upon his enemy's head.

The airplane soared up again, righted itself to an even keel. The passengers staggered back to their seats, saw the injured man rising from the prostrate body of his adversary. He retrieved his suitcase, handed it to the guardianship of an emphatically gesticulating passenger who grinned his courage now that the danger was past, handed him also the pistol for protection in case the stunned man should recover. Then, stumbling and lurching in the now eccentric movements of the machine, he opened the little door in the saloon wall and disappeared into the forward compartment. . . .

A firm of diamond-merchants in Amsterdam gave the pilot the dinner of his life that night.

TRAILS TO SANTA FE

(Continued from page 82)

way,—Indians, drought, treachery, pitiless desert forces,—with no further thought of self but with every thought for those who had put their trust in him, *he came through clean!* He stood by his followers to the end of the trail!

A moving-picture story—admission twenty cents and war-tax. That's all. But the God of Things As They Are has witnessed greater glories—unwept, unhonored and unsung—in long-forgotten actualities than the scenario-writers of a hundred generations might conceive.

From that screen, straight to the soul of a small-town manufacturer on the eve of running away from a trouble to solve it, pierced the message of the fable.

AT half-past ten that night MacKane found himself wandering around outside of the Olympic Theater. He crossed the street to the Common and sank upon a cold, hard iron settee in the shadow of the Soldiers' Monument. Somehow, there in the cold of that midwinter night, it all became as clear as the frosty light to him. It came smashing home to young MacKane—the great comparison! Had not he also been placed in charge of a wagon-train? Had not its members placed the same simple faith in his guidance?

And the girl?

Malcolm MacKane rose from that cold iron bench and proceeded slowly down Main Street to the Western Union office next Murray's harness store. The operator was new, transferred from Binghamton, and wouldn't understand. It was the only thing to do—now. And so, that night the singing wires carried to a girl waiting, wondering, across the Dominion line, this message:

Cannot keep my promise to you.
Shall stick by the ship and see it through. If only you could understand.

Twenty minutes later Malcolm MacKane let himself into the office of his factory and turning on the green-shaded desk-light, sank into his swivel-chair saddle.

How long he sat there, his mind racing back over the actualities behind and the possibilities ahead, MacKane never knew; but suddenly his eye was attracted by an envelope lying on the floor. It was the same he had signed for earlier that evening and must have slipped from his overcoat pocket where he had thrust it, as he threw his coat over the chair at the end of his desk. Indifferently he tore off the end and withdrew the contents in a fold of paper, a letter, and a check, payable to himself, for \$34,575.15.

Dazedly he examined the envelope. He read and re-read the accompanying papers and the letter. No, there was no mistake—a legacy from his aunt, his dead mother's only sister, of whose death, nearly two years before, he had scarcely taken any notice. Stupidly he gazed about the dingy office, but always his eyes came back to the check. Thirty-four thousand dollars!—in one check!—and made out to him!

"My Gawd!" he muttered, when at last the words came, "My Gawd!"

"THE TRAIL TO SANTA FE" His train! He'd bring them through—he'd show them! He'd bring them through—in spite of hell!

And back on the straight trail again, the first thing MacKane did was to endorse that check for \$34,575.15 and mail it with an explanatory note to the People's National Bank, where it would be entered for collection with the first business of the coming morning.

Then with the stockholders' book in front of him alongside the ledger of creditors' accounts, he began to write checks. He wrote checks totaling thirty-two thousand and eight hundred dollars in the succeeding half-hour. All were dated six days ahead, giving his legacy-check time to travel to Taunton and the money to be placed to his credit at the bank to make them good.

He uncovered one of the office typewriters. With two fingers he punched out two- and three-line statements, explaining the check which would accom-

pany each. Thus he settled all the claims of his creditors which the business lacked the assets to cover. He sealed the envelopes and affixed the stamps.

Old Scotty Sampson, the night watchman, discovered him working feverishly at his desk as the hour drew toward midnight. He coughed apologetically.

"Mr. MacKane," he began, "my ol' woman's sick and couldn't pack me no pail o' grub tonight. If you're goin' to be here fer the next half-hour, could I run upstreet and grab a snack off the lunch-cart?"

"Yes," consented MacKane,—"and swing around by the station. Drop this big packet of letters into the mail-train letter-box so they'll go down-country on the twelve-thirty-five. This single letter to the bank, drop in the box in front of the post office, where it'll be collected the first thing in the morning."

"I'll do that, sir," replied the watchman,—"and I'm much obliged."

When the door closed behind the old man, Malcolm MacKane leaned back in his creaking swivel-saddle.

"And this," he muttered aloud, "is how it feels to be a hero! Hell! After all, no man's a hero unless there's some one to applaud. I guess heroism, after all, is just duty with the spotlight turned off. Preston wont start his bankruptcy proceedings, but there's little future for the business now, any more than there has been in the past. I've saved only salvage—a mass of junk! And for this, Bill Hardy, you're responsible!"

At twelve-thirty-five, old Scotty returned.

"I mailed your letters," he announced. "Comin' back, I met Tim Medbury just goin' home. Tim's post-office box is directly under yours. Tim said that darned Jim Ruggles was always sticking mail into his box that belonged in yours. And he gimme this. It belongs to you! And that new Western Union feller from Bennington was at the lunch cart and said a telegram came for you a spell ago that he cal'tated to deliver in the mornin'. I told him you was here and he went back and unlocked an—"

MacKane tore open the telegram and read it under the cover of light to read:

I do understand. I prayed that you would stay, but if you had come, I never would have let you know. So I am coming to you for always. We shall win together. It was the test.

AGNES.

With a choking sob MacKane's chin sank upon his breast.

Old Scotty leaned closer.

"Bad news, Mr. MacKane—somebody dead?"

The younger man lifted his radiant face to the old, seamed one above him. "No, Scotty—nobody dead!" he cried. "Somebody living!"

And as the old man skipped out of the room, the reborn man at the desk opened the letter lying there and read: "We have decided to accept your proposition in recontracting for the output of your factory. We are sending Mr. Warner to make such arrangements—"

But Mac read no farther, because he could not.

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PERIWINKLE HOUSE

(Continued from page 77)

on your honor. I said that you have seen her. You have; you spoke of her. Nadine—"

"Oh, Virgil! But her father!"

"Yes, I know. But let me tell you my story."

He told of his love, not of his father's death—told her nothing of his oath; she listened enraptured; and when he had finished, she mothered him with her arms about his neck.

"Tycie, I wish I may die dead if it isn't Liberty Shottle!"

"Colonel Shottle, at your service," replied Liberty, bowing and gesturing with his gloves in his hand.

"Well, Liberty!" cried his aunt, giving him a hug of welcome.

The General and Drace grasped him, stroked his velvety raiment, urging him to a seat.

"Why all this, Colonel Shottle?"—from the General. "You don't mean to tell me that you have sold your jute-stock?"

"Uncle Howard, sir, first issue orders to have my carriage stored, my horses stabled and my driver quartered, please."

The order was issued, and they sat waiting for Shottle to explain his transformation.

"A simple story," he began, stretching out his legs. "But do not forestall me. Poker, dice, roulette, faro, hazard—all of them failed."

"And this comes of legitimate investment!" Tycie cried. "I knew it would. Oh, I knew it just had to come. Now tell us about it."

"It was an investment, Aunt Tycie. But let me not forestall myself. I left here on a boat, got broke. Finally I reached Tampa, Florida."

"Away down there, Liberty?"—from Tycie.

"Patience, my dear aunt. Tampa, and broke! After a day of hope with its throat cut from ear to ear, I got on a boat bound for Havana. The Spanish captain gave me passage for service. He was studying English, and I agreed to explain to him certain niceties of our mother tongue, you understand; and I am sure that reaching port, he knew more about gambling terms than he could have picked up in a year of close study in one of our ordinary schools. He was appreciative, generous, and gave me a bonus of five dollars. I went to a hotel, not of the first class, and it was there that I made my investment. The weather was warm and—"

"For gracious sake, Liberty, tell us," his aunt urged him.

"That is my aim, but let us not be impetuous. . . . I was eating a Spanish

stew out on the sidewalk, the weather being warm, when along came an agent—not a man in distress, but a regular agent, and I invested with him. I bought a ticket in the Havana Lottery. . . . Wait, now. Nothing ever happens until it does, you know. The drawing came off two days later, and my number, 356,792, won the first prize, twenty thousand in gold."

Tycie hugged him; Drace shook his hand; and the General exclaimed his astonishment.

"Well, that beats anything I ever heard in my life. It doesn't seem possible, sir."

"No, and I was somewhat taken by surprise, Uncle Howard. But there is often success in a change of occupation, and I had tried everything else. It took me a few moments to adjust myself; then I got a draft, and in Mobile received premium enough on my gold-certificate to pay my debts. And now it gives me great pleasure to perform that duty. I owe you, Uncle Howard, twelve hundred and thirty dollars, all told. Aunt Tycie, I owe you five hundred. Virgil, I owe you—but we'll get at that later. Worthy and patient creditors, here we are!"

He took out a roll of bank-notes, counted the amount of his indebtedness to his aunt and showered her lap with greenbacks. Then he turned to the General.

"No, Liberty, I don't want the money," protested Bethpage. "If you pay me, it will be the first time you ever returned borrowed money to me, and I don't care to have you establish a precedent that might bring disappointment in the future."

After the family bedtime Shottle came into Drace's room and requested him to report as to what progress he had made; and Drace told him all that had occurred.

"And now let me tell you a notion of mine," said Shottle then. "If you are waiting for that old shankbone to decay, you'll perhaps wait twenty years. Attention: I'm going on a little trip tomorrow. In two days, when I come back, I'll drive down to a convenient point; you fetch the girl, into the carriage you jump, and away we go, drive over to some place where we can catch a train, and Cincinnati before old Stepho knows which way we've gone. What do you say?"

"But—what becomes of my oath? Oh, don't think that because I daily I have forgotten it or that in one jot I shall fail to keep it. If I should, in all after-life I'd have a contempt for myself."

CHAPTER XV

"TILL Thursday!" Drace had cried. Nadine had echoed it; and another voice, hidden in the cane, had muttered the words with how different a meaning! Now Thursday was come again; and Virgil Drace, infirm of purpose, again made his way down the river and through the swamp to his tryst with Nadine.

But Death sought to make a third at that tryst. From afar the sentineled Tony had seen Drace coming. And hardly had the Northerner's canoe touched the bank when from out the cane Tony and Stepho leaped upon him and bore him to the ground, dazed by a blow from an oar.

"Ha! My fine carpetbagger! You seize my wrist and keep my knife from the old General! You steal here to make love to my daughter! Ha! Who will now keep my knife from you? In a little while, now, you will be deep in the marsh, and the green mold will be on your bones. And the old fool at the big house, he die too, for my men will cut his throat. And then—"

A piercing cry from the house, and Nadine ran to them, a knife that mated Stepho's dirk clutched in her hand.

"No—no!" she cried. "You shall not."

Stepho looked up. "Take the girl away, Tony," he commanded.

But Nadine threatened him off with her knife. Then she turned the blade in another direction and spoke again. "If you do not let Virgil go," she said, "I will kill myself—now."

Stepho knew Nadine—the wild heart of her. "You promise never to see this man again, and to marry Monsieur Boyce like I wish?"

"I promise nothing—except that I will kill myself if you do not let him go."

Stepho hesitated a moment, craft fighting with anger. Then craft won: he or Tony would stroll up to the Bethpage plantation and make an end of the General and Drace that night.

"All right," he snarled. "He can go. But let him never come back here or—"

He drew the back of his dirk across his own throat in a significant gesture. Then with Tony he lifted Drace into his canoe; and the young man, still dazed from the blow, feebly made his way out of the swamp.

When he had passed from sight, Nadine dropped her knife and sank to the ground, sobbing. Old Stepho turned savagely upon her.

"You liar! You she-wolf! I would kill you, but I promise you to the man Boyce. An' now there come something that I tell you. In you there is not the blood of Stepho la Vitte. But you never shall know your name. You she-wolf!"

He thrust himself toward her, his fangs gleaming in his merciless mouth, but without flinching, she now laughed in his face.

"Oh, you make me so thankful that I am not your child! You hang his father and would murder him! But he will be gone; and if you kill me, it makes no matter. And you think I will stay here and let the man come to marry me! I will—"

He seized her, and convenient Tony ran in to help. She fought with the dirk, but they wrenched it from her hand, held her helpless, dragged her into her room; and she lay for a time on the floor while she heard them fastening her in her prison. It was now dark. She got up, went to the window and found that heavy bars had been nailed across it. She lighted her lamp and with a pencil began to write a note to Drace, praying in her heart that she might find

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some way to send it to him. Little she
slept, and in the dawn she was at the
window, the vines all of them gone. She
heard footsteps near, and she tried to
look out to discover who it might be,
but she could gaze neither to the right
nor the left, so closely was she mewed.
She spoke, softly, louder; and then there
drew near the darkened form of a man,
Batoche, an old frog-hunter whom once
before she had employed.

"I am here to borrow the muskrat-
spear for the one day, for mine he was
broke; but they are still asleep."

"Come closer, good Batoche, and listen
to me. Take this note to Monsieur
Drace, at General Bethpage's house—
quick, with no one to see you, and I will
give you a diamond when you come
back."

"Give me the note, an' I be there
soon."

She gave him the note, and he hast-
ened away. She stood at the door, won-
dering why she had not heard her father
stirring about. Once she thought she
heard him call Tony. After a long time
Tony came, and she heard them together
as they went out. Then all was silent.

CHAPTER XVI

SICK in mind and body, Drace made
his way back to Bethpage. He made
himself as presentable as possible before
he entered the house; fortunately, too,
the attention of Tycie and the General
was at that moment centered on Colonel
Josh, who had stopped off to pay them
a call—and who showed astonishment
when asked to walk out to dinner, though
he yielded with astonishing alacrity to
the pressure of the General's hand upon
his arm. He was busy with a helping
of late mustard greens and hog's jowl,
when Tycie inquired:

"And how is dear Lucy?"
"Madam," said Josh, "I am grieved
to impart to you a distressful piece of
news. She is soon to be married to a
man named Spivan."

"Oh, I'm so sorry, Colonel Josh."
"Madam, it is a calamity. Luke
Spivan!"

"What's the matter with him?" the
General inquired. "Isn't broke, is he?"

"General, the man has money. But
do you know what his calling is? I
shall enlighten you, sir. This fellow is
a dealer in oysters, the—the excrescence
of the sea, you might say. And not
only that, but he deals in crawfish as
well, back-crawling crawfish, sir. I of-
fered her my heart and my home. I
told her that I would devote my life to
her, and from week to week she put me
off. But when this fellow Spivan asked
her, I understand she accepted him at a
jump, sir. And now I advise him to
keep out of my way."

"Oysters and crawfish, eh?" said the
General, winking at Drace.

"Those were my words, General—not
only oysters but crawfish. I would not
have believed it if she had not assured
me with her own lips, lips that I have
worshipped, by — Madam, you will
please pardon my nearness to profanity."

Tycie's sympathy went out to old Josh,
haloed him; and with her eyes she begged
the General to drop the subject, but it

Little she was at the gate. She tried to might be, the right he mewed, then there of a man, hom once

was sweeter to him than any sugar ever grained in his mill.

After dinner they were in the parlor when they saw a vagabond equipage stop at the gate, an old carry-all drawn by a staggering horse, driven by a ragged negro. There was one passenger, in the habiliments of a scarecrow, topped off with a yellow cotton hat—enough to disguise any man on earth save one, and this man was the exception!

"Tycie, what did I tell you!" cried the General. "I knew it as well as I knew my name. Now look at him."

They looked at him, went out into the hall to meet him, Tycie in convenient tears. The visitor kissed her and shook hands with the men.

"It is not necessary for me to assert that I hold no commission, civil or military," said the vagrant.

"Sit down, sir," commanded the General. And then, surveying him slowly from head to foot: "Will you please state as to whether or not you regard yourself a human being?"

"General," said Tycie, "please don't scold him, for I am sure he must be hungry."

"My dear, I shall not scold him; but by Gideon, I don't see anything about him that calls for congratulations."

"Liberty," said Virgil, "tomorrow we'll go over and have the parish surveyor run you off for a suit of clothes."

"My dear relatives, I thank you for these little attentions; and as to your question, Uncle Howard, let me say, sir, that my claims as to being a human are somewhat vague. One of the first things I discovered about myself was my unreality. When do we eat?"

Tycie ran out and returned with a piece of frosted cake that looked like a corner broken off a marble mantelpiece. The General was laughing.

"Well, Liberty, we are always glad to see you, anyway. It is the unreality, if I may so speak, that spices our lives; and when you come with your gilded worries, you enliven us. Where have you been, anyhow?"

"I've been wherever there is," said Shottle, gesturing with his cake. "First I went to Memphis, to the races, and gave old Skinny Hughes two hundred for a sure card on the entries. Lost ten thousand. Then I followed the horses to Lexington, with my bank-account leaking like a sprinkling cart. But why linger when nothing can be swifter than the approach of poverty? Finally I sold my clothes to a negro preacher and invested my all in lottery-tickets. It seemed that I possessed myself of all the figures of the multiplication table, didn't see how I could possibly miss, but I did. It wasn't laid out for me to win again. A fellow never has but one real fling. He gets to a certain pinnacle of fortune, slips off, and spends the rest of his life struggling to get back. When do we eat?"

LONG after bedtime Shottle came to Virgil's room.

"Virgil, you know I've got to hit on something of a permanent nature. So the question is, now that I've quit gambling, what am I going to do? If you'll not go to sleep, I'll tell you of a plan.

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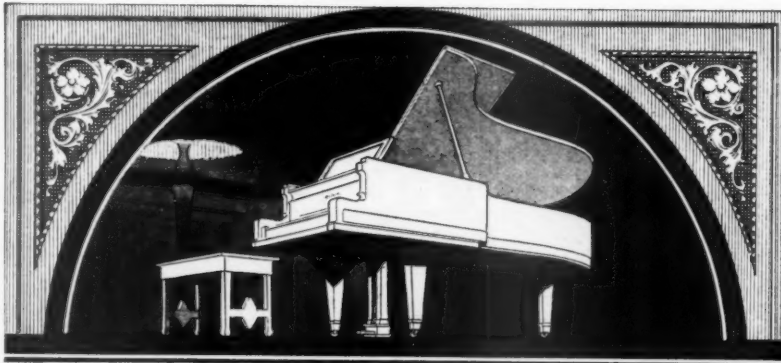
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"Don't believe I ever did."

"All right, you've got something to look forward to. . . . Yes, I'll be the ring-master, and—"

"And bet an elephant on the turn of a card," said Virgil.

"Ah, one of my own, perhaps, but not one intrusted to me. I am not an gambler of elephants. I wouldn't wager a monkey not my own. I wouldn't bet a garter-snake on a sure thing. Besides, I told you I'd quit gambling—that is, I'm quitting. It isn't wise to expose my constitution to the shock of a sudden change. . . . Well, good night"

DRACE was far too disturbed in mind to sleep, and before the sun was high, he walked out alone in the garden, to muse upon his situation. Slowly he paced his way along the path. Some one spoke, and he turned to face the man Batoche.

"Monsieur, a note."

Drace took the paper and hastened into the summer-house.

The note was brief, but full in the expression of what had befallen Nadine, seeming to throb with the telling of it: "As soon as you can, my love! one, you must come to me to take me from the man I thought my father, but who is the awful brute. Yesterday he called me a she-wolf and told me I am not his daughter; and when he told me, my heart was light, for then I have not within me the murderer's blood. Come not alone, Virgil, for Tony will be here, and both of them watch. I am locked a prisoner in my room, and tomorrow they take me to Memphis to make me marry Monsieur Boyce. But I fear not so long as I know you come."

Quickly Drace slipped up to his room, buckled on his pistol, found a rope, looped it with a hangman's noose and tucked it beneath his coat. Nadine was not Stepho's daughter; now he was free to act! Swift was he to answer the appeal, but he was set against her caution, the advice to bring some one with him. It was his fight alone, the execution of his oath, which was not dead like the autumn leaf, but fresh like the new leaf in the spring. He would shoot Tony, the dog, and then string up his master.

No one saw him, not even the watchful Tycie, and he hastened toward Willow Head, not having found a boat at the landing. Never had the river seemed so broad, the current so swift. At last his canoe touched in among the cane-roots at the island's edge. He leaped ashore, but was cautious in the cane, an Indian in stealth as he approached the house. He heard not a sound, saw no smoke issue from the chimney. Perhaps the wolves were in wait for him, to snap him, but he was now in full view, and he ran

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at the top of his speed. But near the house he halted, peering about, looked in at the door of the main room, found it deserted, then walked softly around to the barred window. Nadine spoke before he recognized her, standing in the twilight of her prison.

"My heart was loud to tell me you would come, Virgil. And you brought no one with you. But of that there was no need now."

He stood in silence looking at her, his strength exerted against a bar at the window, to tear it loose, but the wrought-iron nails were too long, and he could not budge them.

"The ax, Virgil! Is it lying there?"

Acting upon her suggestion, and with no caution now against making a noise, he cut the bars away and helped her through the window.

"Nadine," he said, "my oath must now be kept."

His arms about her, he stood pressing her close, and never had he felt so strong, and surely never so determined. Her eyes half closed, her head on his arm, she did not speak. She looked as if she were at rest and dreaming. He kissed her, and her eyes flashed wide.

"I have come to shag the monster that called you a she-wolf."

"When I have told you, yes. And now you will listen. Early I thought I heard Tony and my—I mean Stepho la Vitte, go out. But Stepho was not walking with Tony, the strong man, but was dragged out in the rocking-chair; for some time in the night come the strange stroke, and Stepho was paralyzed."

"Nadine! What are you saying?"

"I am saying that you must listen. Tony came to the window and told me what was happen'. I ask him to let me out, but he would not, for he wants to please Stepho till the last, on account of the money that may be somewhere hid. He went for the doctor, and he came but has gone away again, for I hear him say he can do no good. The old man was out in his chair where he so often sit; and we will go see him, for it will not be for long. Let us forget all and be kind when death was come, Virgil."

"Yes, but where is Tony now?"

"I think he is looking for the money. Let us go now to the poor old man."

"You forgive easily, Nadine."

She looked at him in wonderment.

"How can we not forgive when the heart say we must, Virgil? He use me for the trap, which I will explain all to you, but he give me the chance to be with you, and for that I thank him—and for not being my sure-enough father. . . . Come with me."

OLD Stepho sat in his chair asleep, but as they approached him, he opened his eyes, looked at Nadine, then at Drace.

"Monsieur was ver' strong. An' I kill you if I be not struck down like the beef. An' Tony kill you if he here, but I send him off for something. Ah, the leetle gel, she hate me now?"

"Monsieur," she said, "I cannot find it in my heart to hate. It is the poison. Many times you were kind, and I remember them."

He bowed his head, and through his closed lashes looked up at Drace, fire



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gleaming through brushwood. But he spoke to Nadine, turning upon her a less malignant light.

"The paralyze, it begin down here an' creep up. When it touch the heart, I was go. I say just now that Tony, he would kill the strong monsieur. He would not. He be scared when I was done. . . .

"Your name, leetle gel," pursued Stepho, "was Walton—the daughter of a Northern man who live in the same town with Mr. Drace's father near Cincinnati. You an' your mother were carried off by my men; but your mother, she fall from the horse just as we come to our camp, and she die. About her neck was a purse with money and papers—one that tell where more money is buried. After the war I go back and dig up this money, but I keep it for you, for your dowry. It is here—buried under the hearthstone. . . . Now—now I beg you to go for Father Tahan. You know where he live. Quick, for it creep up."

"Yes, I will go. Virgil will stay to keep you company."

"Let me go with you," Drace pleaded, fearful that some harm might befall her.

"No, my love one," she gently opposed him. "You must stay here, for no harm can come to me now. Stay here and be kind to him, for kindness is the will of the One above. You will, yes?"

She kissed him fondly, and the old wolf-eyes closed, that they might not see. Now she was ready to go. Virgil steadied the canoe for her and gently shoved it off. She threw him a kiss, and rounding a green cape, raised her paddle into the sunlight and flashed him adieu.

DRACE returned to Stepho's chair, the old man shagging his brows at him.

Then, thinking of the rope still buttoned tightly beneath his coat, he tore it out and threw it away. Nature, he reflected, had usurped his task, and he could safely turn over to her his claims. A slight noise behind him; he looked quickly about, and there a few feet behind him at the edge of the cane, stood Tony. Upon him the vision of Drace's countenance came, it seemed, with a startling flash. Instantly he fell back, through the cane fringe into the bayou. Loudly he cried for help.

"Oh, monsieur," implored the old man, "please he'p heem queek. He can no swim. An' he die befo' hees sins they was forgive. He'p the po' wretch, monsieur. Queek, monsieur."

Virgil threw off his coat and his pistol-belt, and leaped into the water. A moment before, he would have shot the beast; now he would save him.

Tony was not in sight. But soon he arose, swimming, and Drace saw a knife gleam in his hand. In the water Tony was as much at home as a beaver! He dived, and Virgil knew now that it was his aim to dart beneath him and with the knife to rip him as a skillful swimmer rips a crocodile. But in the water the strong man, young Drace, was at home too, and turning about with a quick swirl, he waited. Tony came up; and now they came toward each other, like rival otters—grappled and struggled, treading water, shoulders up. Virgil caught Tony's left wrist, wrenched his arm limp and help-

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less, seized him by the throat, his left hand steel-gripped about the murderous right wrist, the knife-hand.

No mercy now! Fire and water, their game! Down, gasping, down! The head beneath the surface, the hand still out, striving to stab. Slowly the hand opened; the knife dropped; the hand closed—half opened, was limp. Drace turned loose his grip. The body sank.

Virgil swam ashore and came dripping out of the cane. The old man spoke:

"Tony! Whar he?"

"I have drowned him."

"Monsieur was ver' strong!"

"If I had brought him to the shore, he would have sneaked a chance to murder me."

"He was the bad man, yes. He ought be dead, yes. I was to keel heem bimeby. He keel the man here not long 'go. Twice he go keel you, an' once he snap the pistol. I set the trap for you to be stabbed in the water. Then there be no blood to tell the tale. Now I am so sor'. Will monsieur pull me into the house?"

"No. You would reach for a pistol to shoot me. Stay where you are."

"Monsieur have still suspicion. We wait."

VIRGIL put on his coat, his belt, and sat down on the grass. The old man was silent, his eyes closed. He might be dead, but no matter. More than an hour dragged by, the breeze moaning in the cane. Virgil arose and stood near the chair. Stepho opened his eyes, but was silent. Virgil sat down again and waited, the wind tangling the tops of the cane.

He heard the canoe coming.

Father Tahan was kindly and soft of voice. For many a despairing wretch he had held the Cross. At sight of him old Stepho's eyes were still hard. Time wears granite away, but does not mellow it. Not yet had he granted mercy, and for no pity could he hope.

"Father, this is the man I would keel. I hate heem, the carpethag-aire."

"It is not true," said Virgil, standing near. "I fought against the carpethaggers in June, in New Orleans, when they were hanging a man. I cut him down."

How great can be an instant change! The old wolf-eyes dewed soft.

"Oh, monsieur, I was that man! They hang me. I hear of the brave man, but I not know it was you. Please forgive me. . . . Tek the leetle gel, an' I know you be kind to her. She love you. For you she would die. Monsieur, I beg you not think so hard of me. . . . No, my leetle gel, you must not cry."

"I did not know you," said Drace. "A cloth was about your features. Think not of it now. Listen to the one who has come with a message of peace and forgiveness."

The priest devoted himself to his sacred offices. The wind moaned softly in the cane. . . .

The priest spoke presently to Virgil. "She must not stay here. Take her away, and I will see that everything shall be done."

Nadine stood with Virgil's coat pulled close about her face. And into his heart she spoke:

"The sun is low, Virgil. But you leave me now no more."

THE END



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BILL TITUS EKE BUTTS IN

(Continued from page 46)

He opened the door to his outer office with his left hand and thrust his right deep into his trousers pocket. Garret expressed perfunctory regrets at having taken up Captain Titus' valuable time, and went away.

Bill heard nothing further of him or his business affairs until one night ten days later, when he stood at the end of the railroad platform at the boom oil-town of Spiller as the evening train came in.

A well-groomed man of middle age, carrying two heavy suitcases, descended from the train, looked about to see if anything in the shape of a luggage-carrier was present, gave up the idea of getting either a porter or a taxi, and picked out Bill as one of the few men in sight who did not seem to be in a hurry.

"Can you direct me, sir, to the best hotel?" he asked.

"There's only one, and it aint," Captain Titus responded as he got a good view of the stranger's face in the light from the station window. "And if it was, you couldn't get a room in it, because they're all gone or reserved. It's getting as bad here as it is in New York, where they have to send the hotel overflow to Newark or Poughkeepsie. Nothing but a friend stands between you and a blanket under the stars, Mr. Seldon."

The other dropped his bags and exclaimed with a delight that was not feigned: "Mr. Titus! Of all the good luck! You're a great rock in a weary land."

Bill picked up one of the suitcases. "I owe you something for the memory of that place you led me and Mr. Leland into, that last night I saw you—that place on Broadway where they have the little toasted cheese sandwiches for you to eat while that bald-headed artist—is his name Joseph?—mixes what you come in for."

"Not come—came," Seldon corrected sadly.

They reached the rambling two-storied hotel, where Captain Titus, while his friend ate ham and eggs and biscuit, arranged for the placing of another bed in his room. There, after supper, they sat smoking and discussing the welfare of mutual friends and acquaintances in New York.

"You're down here on some business for the Universal, I s'pose," Bill remarked. "The big fellows thinking of buying into this field?"

Seldon nodded. "Perhaps. I'm to look into two or three properties. Perhaps you'll be willing to advise me—at least to put me wise to such odds and ends of inside stuff as might have a bearing on my report."

"Shorest thing you know. New York curb is running pretty strong on Texas oils, isn't it?"

"They're crazy over some of them, and that goes with all possible meanings. Have you happened to see a Monday afternoon New York paper, or hasn't it got here yet?"

"I'd have one by tomorrow mawnin' if I was home in San 'Ntonio, but I don't

guess there are any New York paper subscribers here in Spiller."

"The market went wild Monday over Great Southwest Oil. Price opened at eighty-seven and closed at two dollars and eight. It was easily the most active stock of the day. And it was steadily advancing. I wouldn't be surprised if by now it was three-and-a-half or four dollars, to the ultimate sorrow of ten thousand suckers. Do you know this Boyl Garrett, who is manipulating Great Southwest?"

"I've met him—once."

"He is a star performer," Seldon declared with grudging admiration. "Little school-teachers with a few hundred dollars for their old age, young mechanics with a small nest-egg in the savings bank and no knowledge of business, and supernumerary clergymen used to be his specialty; but the war gave him his chance to broaden out. I suppose it was a fine thing, during the Liberty Loan campaign, to print the names of the subscribers in the small-town newspapers. It encouraged others to go and do likewise. But it certainly gave the get-rich-quick artists some beautiful new sucker-lists."

"Doesn't he ever lay himself open with his circulars?"

"Not Garrett. He's had too much experience. The authorities have been laying for him for ten years, and they have never got him, and I doubt if they ever will. He keeps himself thoroughly covered. Every transaction that he carries out looks legal, and he never makes confidants; so there isn't anybody to testify, when his companies don't pan out, that he didn't really do his best to make them pan out. This business that he is putting over right now with the Single Star Oil Company is a raw deal,—everybody who is more than ten years old and has ever mixed into any big business can see that,—but there isn't a single loophole in it that the authorities could prosecute him on. And the little investors that he is getting don't know anything about big business, and some of them, mentally, are not over ten."

"The Single Star, eh?" Bill commented. "They're neighbors of mine; their property is directly south of my Three Counties Company, on Mule Creek. I hadn't heard about their being in any deal with Garrett. They're a good producing company."

"That is what is so exasperating about it," Seldon said. "The suckers are looking up the Single Star and discovering what its production is, and what dividends it is paying. And they bite like fish."

"What's the scheme?"

Seldon leaned over, opened one of his suitcases and took out a package of papers. "Some odds and ends that I hadn't been through when I left the office Monday afternoon, so I stuffed them in to read on the way down," he explained. He handed a typewritten sheet to Bill. It was on the letterhead of Bolster, Garrett & Company, and read:

A large number of our customers have asked our advice as to the purchase of additional shares of Great Southwest Oil and Development at the present price, and our opinion as to the probability of the stock advancing in value in the immediate future.

Certain negotiations are under way—negotiations which, if they are completed, would increase the value of Great Southwest very greatly. We regret that we are not at liberty at this moment to state what these negotiations are. At the proper moment we shall do so. Our advice to our customers is to await our word—but be ready, if we recommend it, to increase their holdings of Great Southwest.

There was a little more, no more definite than those first two paragraphs.

"Can you put your finger on anything in that?" Seldon demanded. "If that helps make suckers rush into the market and run Great Southwest up to three or four dollars a share, is there anything you could come back on Bolster, Garrett & Company for?"

"But why should they rush in?" Bill asked mildly. "Doesn't this letter advise them not to?"

"And when one man says to others, 'This stock is going up by leaps and bounds by and by, but don't buy any of it at the present price until I tell you to,' isn't it human nature for every person who gets the tip to go out and buy, the first crack out of the box; so as to be in on the ground floor before it goes up? But the real meat of the situation isn't in that letter. Take a look at this one."

The sheet that Seldon now handed Captain Titus was a printed circular, bearing the heading:

AYERS, AYERS & WOLFF
Daily Market Letter

The first paragraph was a mass of generalizations regarding the trend of the curb market. The second read as follows:

It is rumored in the Street that the Great Southwest Oil and Development Corporation, through confidential agents, is about to accomplish a coup that may put the stock of that company to five, eight, very possibly to ten dollars per share.

We are reliably informed that the Great Southwest is about to purchase a controlling interest in the Single Star Oil Company, whose properties in the wonderful Spiller Field have already brought in five wells, one of them a famous gusher, and which has more than ten other wells now in process of drilling, three of them being down more than 2,500 feet, or nearly to the oil sand. If this deal is put through, it may fairly be anticipated that the rise in Great Southwest stock will be one of the sensational events of the year on the New York curb.

Officers and directors of the Company decline either to affirm or deny the story that they are about to acquire the Single Star. We are able to state, however, of our own knowledge, that an option of more than three-quarters of the Single Star stock has been sold by the controlling owners to interests which in turn have transferred their option to the Great Southwest. The cash that has already been paid for this option is a



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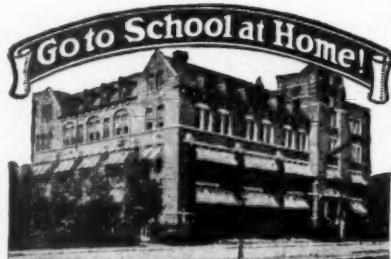
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Name.....

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considerable sum—more than twenty-five thousand dollars.

We are also able to state that Treasurer Garrett of the Southwest Oil is now spending all his time at Spiller, where are located the Single Star properties.

"Isn't it simple?" Seldon demanded, as Bill looked up from the sheet. "It doesn't say the Great Southwest is going to buy the Single Star. It doesn't state one single thing as fact except that an option has been purchased, which is undoubtedly true. Yet ninety-nine out of every hundred men and women on that sucker-list will take it for granted that when anybody buys an option, he naturally has to go ahead and acquire the property, and this Ayers & Wolff letter will strike them as additional evidence that they had better get into the market with their little old Liberty Bonds and buy Great Southwest before the big wind hits the price."

"Who are Ayers, Ayers & Wolff?" Bill asked.

"Another one of Boyd Garrett's companies. And this market letter, of course, goes out to the same list as his Bolster, Garrett & Company advice." He smoked a moment silently. "And in one day after this stuff went broadcast, so many people fell for it—with the help of some 'washing' on the curb, perhaps, to make it rise faster—that the price went from eighty-seven cents to two dollars and eight. By the way, Mr. Titus: you know that Great Southwest property and the terms of their lease with the land-owner; what is the stock really worth, if they don't buy or lease any more acreage?"

"It wouldn't be worth a cent to me," Bill replied conservatively.

"It's a rotten shame they don't get that Garrett and land him where he can't ruin any more little school teachers, old ministers and hard-working people with bonds that they scrimped and saved for! He has put over some pretty strong games before, but this one—He's likely to clean up a million. The skunk! If anybody who could prove that he didn't really intend or hope to take up that option could tell the story to the post office inspectors—But there's small likelihood he has ever admitted it to anybody."

"Don't seem as if he'd be likely to," Bill agreed.

Seldon failed to suppress a yawn, and apologized, saying he had not been sleeping well on the trains.

"Turn in as soon as you like," Captain Titus told him. "I was thinking of going out and walking around town a bit. I'll try not to disturb you when I come in."

THEIR conversation ran in the ex-Ranger's mind as he sauntered down the main street of Spiller, whose activities, due to the twenty-four-hour operations of many of the oil companies, remained feverish until long after midnight. "Why should I go out of my way to exterminate skunks?" he said to himself. "There are men whose business it is to hunt 'em. Why me?"

Just then two people came from the opposite direction through the crowd and turned into the movie-theater. Bill recognized

the girl first and then noted, with surprise, that her companion was Promoter Boyd Garrett. The man was leaning toward her, his every attitude one of exaggerated gallantry. Neither of them saw Titus.

The girl was very pretty and very young. Bill knew her age, approximately—seventeen, although a stranger would have taken her to be a little older. She was laughing admiringly at something Garrett was saying, and her laugh was a little too loud. So were her clothes; and her cheeks, which did not need rouge at all, were lightly tinted. She was Nellie McIntyre, daughter of one of the best drilling bosses in Spiller, and Bill and her father were friends of long standing. Little creases drew themselves between the Captain's eyes.

He bought a ticket at the booth and followed them into the darkened theater.

They stood at the back, waiting for their eyes to get accustomed to the gloom. A picture came to its end, and members of the audience departed, leaving many vacant seats. Garrett and the girl deliberately chose a place quite far back, where there were empty chairs in front, just behind and on both sides of them.

Garrett had a little trouble getting seated and adjusting himself comfortably. The difficulty seemed to be on his right side, and Captain Titus, skilled in such diagnosis, became aware that he was finding it awkward to stow comfortably some object that hung at his hip—beyond doubt, from his motions, a large-calibered pistol in a holster.

Captain Bill, as soon as the promoter had hitched his weapon out of the way and got settled to his satisfaction, slipped quietly into a place two rows behind them.

Neither Garrett nor the girl paid much attention to the screen. He had his arm over the back of her seat, behind her shoulders, and was whispering ardently. She seemed breathlessly excited—fascinated, Bill thought, by his ultra fashionable clothes, his manners, his open-handedness also, no doubt. Words came back from her, spoken more loudly than either she or her companion realized. "Oh, I couldn't!" she was saying. "If my father ever—" The remainder of the sentence was lost.

Garrett urged her impassionedly. An occasional phrase was audible: "What do you want to be a killjoy for?" "What of it? There has to be a first time, doesn't there? There's no harm in—" "—good long ride in my car, just you and me . . . back in the moonlight." "—my little city friends don't think anything of . . . so why not be a sport, girlie?"

She said "No" a good many times, more and more faintly. Finally she stopped saying it. Bill heard Garrett urge impatiently, "Tomorrow night," and she did not answer. He said it again, warmly, insistently, and she caught her breath and nodded. "And now I've got to go home," she said. "Really I have."

"Just whatever the best kid in the world likes," Garrett agreed, too readily, if she had been sophisticated enough to sense it. With her promise given to ride with him on the morrow, what did he care for her company in a stuffy picture-

theater? They departed. Bill waited three or four minutes and also went out. Now he did not saunter, but moved with purposeful strides up the street three or four blocks to where, across the deceptively built up second-story front of a one-story building that was painted a bright yellow, ran a striking sign:

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The building was in darkness, but Bill went confidently around to the back, which also seemed dark until, when only a few feet from the door, it was observed that a small pencil of light came past an edge of a drawn curtain. He knocked, and the door opened a foot, framing a tall, slim, leathery, coatless man of fifty, who threw the door wide open as he identified his visitor, and welcomed him with a shout.

"Cussed if it aint ol' Bill Titus!" he jubilated over his shoulder to three other men of similar type who were sitting about a table under a hanging lamp; and to Bill he declared: "We were concentrating on getting one more congenial spirit, and our prayers must have took. Need five to make a decent game, and only four showed up. Called you on the telephone at the hotel half an hour ago, but they said you wasn't there. Come in, set down, rest your face and hands, and prepare to pay for the privilege."

Titus nodded to the smiling trio behind this welcoming committee of one, but shook his head.

"I'm plumb sorry I can't sit in tonight," he said with real regret, "but it just natchully aint possible. I came on business—sort of. You'll excuse us a few minutes, wont you, fellers. Do you mind coming up front, Sam, into your office?"

Mr. Burns' shrewd eye appraised the serious set to Bill's face. "Deal me out till I come back," he told the three. "You might play a little stud."

He led the way through the hardware, paints, coffins, caskets and furniture of the store to a partitioned-off corner in front, where he lighted a lamp. He sat down, nodded his head abruptly, and remarked:

"Shoot."
"There's something I need to find out, and I need to find it out moderately pronto. I came to you because you're the nearest man I could think of that I could find tonight who might be able to tell me, and because it's a kind of ticklish matter and everybody wouldn't understand. I reckon you know me well enough to know if I bring a lady's name into a conversation that—well, that maybe might seem a little offensive—that I have a good reason to. You'd understand I don't mean to say anything I oughtn't to."

"Of course," Mr. Burns said simply. "What sort of a girl is Jim McIntyre's daughter?"

The abruptness and very unusual character of the question plainly staggered Mr. Burns, because such questions are rarely asked by old-fashioned Texans. There are things the most gossipy do not

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"Some headstrong, I guess," he said after a minute. "And maybe something of a darn' fool. But I figure I've got all through mentioning her outs when I've said that."

"Why don't Jim keep better track of her? He's taking all kind of chances letting her go around loose nights."

"Jim? Didn't you know about him? He aint been here for more'n six weeks. He's up to Fort Worth, in a hospital. Casing fell on his foot."

"But her mother—"

Mr. Burns shrugged his shoulders. "Nice lady, Miz McIntyre," he said apologetically, "but she couldn't go to make Nellie do nothing Nellie didn't want to do. Not exactly a forceful lady, Miz McIntyre aint."

"Did you know the child was running around with this Boyd Garrett, that runs the Great Southwest Company?"

"I've seen 'em on the street once or twice. Old enough to be her daddy. But I guess some walks and picture-shows and maybe a supper or two is all it means. She's flattered."

Bill rose. "He's a skunk, Sam," he declared. "And seeing as how Nellie aint bad, or anything like that, there's something needs to be done about it. I'll be moving along."

"Has he— Say, if that *hombre* has done anything that he needs to be disciplined for, the rest of us old fellers—"

"No, it aint that bad. If he was to go away, right soon, I don't guess there'd be any harm done at all. He can be persuaded, I think, but it has to be done quick. The girl's name can't get into this a-tall. And I'll 'tend to it myself."

"I reckon you're competent. You know he's got some record as a bad actor, don't you?"

"I've heard so."

"All right. However, if you need any help—"

"None except a little more information. Where does he hang out at?"

"If you mean at this hour of the night, he's usually over to the Palace Pool and Billiard Parlors until twelve or after. He's considerable of a pool-shark."

Bill moved to the front door, which Burns opened for his exit. "Tell the boys in the back room again for me that I'm shore sorry I can't piece out the game," he said. "Some other night I'll come over and take all the *dinero* they've got in their clothes. *Adios*."

HE swung rapidly in the direction of the hotel, where Seldon awoke, muttered incoherently, and went quickly to sleep again at Bill's word of assurance—while the ex-Ranger opened a trunk and strapped about his waist a belt with a holster, into which he slipped, after looking to its action, a loaded long-barreled forty-five. Ten minutes later he edged up to Boyd Garrett, who was watching a billiard-game in the Palace Parlors, and courteously asked him if he would step outside a moment for a few words of private conversation.

They stood presently in the little alley that ran down beside the pool-hall. Although pedestrians were passing along the main street at the end of the lane, none were within hearing or looking in that direction. Light which streamed out



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through the open windows gave the two men a good view of each other.

Captain Bill did not waste a word.

"Mr. Garrett," he said in his softest and most courteous voice, "there is a train that leaves at seven-eight tomorrow mawnin'. I'm requesting, suh, that you take it. And I'd greatly appreciate it, when you get away from Spiller, if you'd stay away, please suh."

"What the blazes—"

"Just a minute, please. There's a little more to it: I have to ask, before you go, that you write a letter to Mr. James W. Talbot, president of the Single Star Oil Company, surrendering that option on his property. I'll be glad to accommodate by witnessing your signature, suh."

Garrett's stare was more puzzled than angry. "Are you crazy?" he demanded. "Or have you found some place to get jag-water and loaded up on it?"

"I'm shorely plumb sober, and I aint no more insane than usual," Bill purred. "So you'll take it as being said in all seriousness, I hope, suh, when I tell you this town has got too small for you to live in after tonight—and that before you leave us, it will be necessary for you to give up that option."

Garrett unfastened the one button of his coat that had interfered with its speedy opening. Bill, whose coat was already unbuttoned, gave no sign that he saw any significance in the act. "You talk like a fool!" the promoter sneered. "I don't know why you want me to leave town, and I don't know as I care a damn, but I'm certainly not taking any orders from you or anybody else as to where I shall go or stay. If you haven't got anything more to say to me, I'll bid you good night."

"That is satisfactory so far as I'm concerned," Bill agreed, to the other's surprise. "Only I thought maybe you would rather leave town alone than with the post-office inspector. You see, there happens to be one in Spiller right at this minute. Good, reliable man he is, too—used to handling prisoners who don't want to go." His eyes and voice became speculative. "I s'pose he'd be sure to handcuff you, and everybody'd see what had happened. If you went away all by your lonesome, and had surrendered that option before then, you'd avoid all that. However, it's for you to decide."

Garrett's eyes were glittering dangerously. "Say it in English!" he growled. "What are you threatening me with?"

Bill's voice was very low as he replied. "If you haven't put into my hands within the next halfhour, a waiver of that option, and promised me to leave on the mawnin' train,—and I'll be there to see whether you do or not,—I propose to tell the post-office inspector that you confessed to me, less than a fortnight ago in San Ntonio, that you didn't expect ever to buy my Three Counties Oil Company, but all you wanted was an option for three months. I'll tell him that—and show him the letter your Bolster, Garrett Company got out last Monday about your Single Star deal, and the circular your Ayers, Ayers & Wolff concern got out about the same thing. And how long do you think it will take him to think the matter over before he grabs you for using the mails to defraud?"



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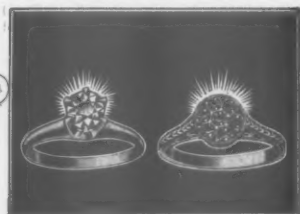
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"You damned old double-crosser!" Garrett cried. "Or is it blackmail?"

"I don't like rough language," Bill told him, almost pleasantly, "but I'll stand a small amount of it, provided you get a move on and do the things I've mentioned." Then, as Garrett began to swear fluently and virulently, his voice took on a new note: "Cussing won't get you anywhere, Garrett. You must've skinned a lot of little fool speculators already with your phony Single Star purchase, but you aint going to skin any more after tomorrow's papers are out. One way to avoid it is to chuck up the sponge. The other is to get pinched. Personally I don't care a hoot which you do, but I should think you would rather throw your hand in the deck. It's beat."

"You have been spilling what I told you in confidence—" Garrett began, but Bill interrupted him.

"You didn't tell me in confidence, and I haven't spilled it—yet. But I'm going to, blame' quick, if you don't make up your mind my way."

Titus read the thoughts of the other in his shifting eyes. There were no witnesses to this conversation, and Titus was the only man who could give evidence that would convict. If he were out of the way—In Texas a man stands an almost certain chance of going free if he can convince a jury that the man he killed went after a gun first. His eyes, from Captain Bill's face, lowered to his hands. They were nowhere near any place where he would wear a holster; nor were they in any position where it would be especially easy for them to reach a weapon quickly. Although he had never happened to hear of Bill's reputation for speed and marksmanship in his Ranger days, Garrett knew that Titus was an old-timer and did not doubt he would, if challenged, resort to pistol-play. If he could taunt him into attempting to draw, and beat him to it—Always a dangerous thing to try, but it had worked twice in Nevada.

"I suppose you are armed," he said.

"I am suh," Bill assured him, still without any motion of the hands.

"Then go after your gun!" And Garrett's own right hand snapped down and back to his six-shooter even as he spoke. With that start, he should have been able to get Titus at just about the second that Bill's pistol came out of its holster to constitute absolute proof that the killing was in self defense.

Bill shot him neatly, scientifically, twice, through the right shoulder, the two holes being perhaps an inch apart—the second echoing the first merely as a precaution. Garrett's single shot came after Bill's first one, and the bullet, as the New Yorker's arm became paralyzed at the moment his weapon was beginning to rise, plowed into the ground at the Captain's feet. Garrett's pistol dropped from his powerless hand; he himself staggered, groaning, against the building.

There were shouts. Men came running. Thirty seconds saw the alley filled with people. Among the earliest was a lean man with a gun in his hand, a deputy sheriff well known to Titus. Bill stood where he had stood when he fired. Garrett's gun in the dirt before him, his own pistol held high in the air by the barrel.

"All right, Tom!" he called to the deputy sheriff. "The ruckus is all over. This man started to draw on me, and I had to let him have it in self-defense."

The deputy sheriff took possession of Bill's pistol and deftly searched him for other weapons. "Sorry to bother you, Cap'n," he said. "Of course nobody doubts your word about anything of this sort, but I'll have to arrest you until you can make bail. We'll go right up to the judge's house and fix it, as soon as I tend to this other feller. Who is he?"

"He's a dirty crook," Bill replied simply. "—a crook that has been robbing school-teachers and old ministers and little fellers with fifty-dollar Liberty Bonds. When we get that bail fixed up, I want to see that post-office inspector that is stopping over at the hotel. And get hold of one or two newspaper correspondents, too, will you? I've got a little story to tell 'em. Meanwhile, don't let this *hombre* get away."

A doctor, looking not at all like a successful practitioner in a great city, but with an experience in gunshot wounds that would have qualified him to give lessons to many a metropolitan surgeon, looked up from where he was administering first aid to the groaning promoter.

"No danger of his getting away for some time," he said. "His right collarbone is shattered from one end to the other."

"Shucks!" cried Captain Bill disgustingly. "I used to be able, shooting at a tall man from the hip thataway, to go in under the collarbone and not hit the lung, thereby disabling 'em proper and not injuring 'em a-tall, as you might say. And now I shoot as rotten as that! That's what getting all out of practice will do for a feller."

BILL TITUS, sitting with his four chums in Reese Warland's parlor at Summerton a week later, had passed. Ewing opened the pot, and all the others stayed without a raise. Bill hesitated.

"Oh, well," he decided, "I might as well come in for percentage. Give me four cards when you get to me."

"No use looking for the joker," remarked Doctor Bannister. "We know who's got it."

Ewing bet two dollars; and Warland, face expressionless, raised him five. He had drawn two cards. Bannister and Ansell promptly threw their hands into the discard, but Captain Bill, chuckling, re-raised ten dollars. "On a four-card draw!" he gloated. "Come see what I got, Reese."

"I s'pose I have to," Warland growled, after Phil Ewing had passed. He pushed in ten brown chips. "I've got three jacks."

"On a four-card draw!" repeated Bill gleefully. "Buck, ball and Billy!" And he faced two aces and the joker—the net count of which, in Texas, is three aces.

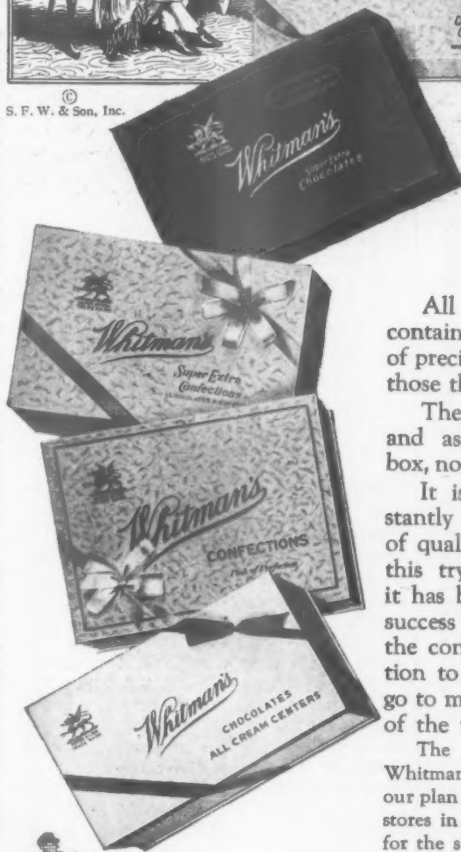
"Aint that a fool for luck?" Warland demanded of the universe. "He had no business in that pot a-tall, and he comes trailing in and takes away the money."

Doctor Bannister parodied softly:

"Bill Titus was a shooter bold
Of more or less renown,
And eke a butter-in was he—"



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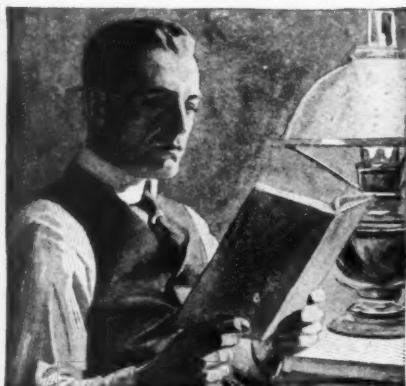
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He felt his muse deserting him and slipped hurriedly into prose: "It's his habit. He just can't help it."
"No suh!" Bill protested. "You're

wrong. I never butt in on what aint my business. . . . But I always reserve the right, as business moves along, to decide when it seems fitten to make it mine."

BEAUTY

(Continued from page 32)

on them (in which case gloom would be ridiculous), and the dread that fate might have played a trick on Clelia (in which case levity would be odious).

And now Nancy Fleet had to turn up and mock him with those quizzing eyes of hers.

CHAPTER III

MISS FLEET was almost frozen with the travel through the storm in her light wraps. Snowflakes had been driven deep into her hair, and as they melted, the water streamed over her face, bringing her coiffure down in shreds and strings. Her lips were blue with chill, and her jaws so palsied that her teeth chattered like a telegraphic instrument. Her features were hopelessly bewildered with the task of expressing so many emotions: she was furious with rage at not looking her best; she was amused at her own bad appearance, for she always laughed at herself before anyone else could; she was in acute distress from the cold that hurt her in every member; she was exhilarated by the combat with the storm.

While she stamped and wrung her numb hands before the fire, the chauffeur explained the difficulty of the return, with the snow blinding him, blanketing the windshield, obliterating the roads and muffling the landscape in white disguises. On one of the turns a lash of wind had almost carried the light machine overboard down a cliff. And the chauffeur crushed Mrs. Roantree's hopes with the report that there had been no sign of Miss Clelia on the way or at the station, and his final word was that there was no chance of reaching the station again until the storm had passed over. That would mean several days of imprisonment, and the sentence threw Mrs. Roantree into a dungeon of deep despondency.

And now Miss Fleet was warm enough to be articulate: "All the way to the train I kept thinking how rotten it was of me to run off and leave you alone. So I came back. I hope you don't mind."

"Thank God for you!" said Mrs. Roantree. "The time is past when I could endure being alone with so many men or be endured by them."

As soon as Miss Fleet was able to leave the fire she managed rather expertly and as if accidentally to edge Larrick into a corner. First she sent a ransacking gaze into him, and then she began on him:

"The real reason I'm back is that I didn't intend to leave you alone up here to the mercies of little Clelia. She is unmerciful, and never so unmerciful as when she is in one of her most innocent

moods. Did you ever happen to realize that innocence is the cruellest thing in the world? That's because it doesn't know, I suppose, how things hurt and how helpless we all are.

"When I was a baby fresh from the skies, I was a perfect beast. I pulled flies' legs off, and scratched my mother's face till it bled. I abused my pets horribly. I remember once when I was yanking a pet pup around by his front leg in spite of his yelps, my father yanked me into the air by my front leg—my arm, I mean. I let out a yelp of pain, but my horror was greater. It was my very first horror. I couldn't believe that my own father would hurt me so. He let me down and said: 'Now you know how it feels to be hurt.'"

"I've never wanted to hurt anybody since. Sometimes I think that one reason there is so much pain in the world is that there has never been anybody to yank God across the universe by the arm and say: 'Now you know how it feels to be hurt.' Christ knew. He wept, you know. And He fainted on the cross and asked God why He had forsaken Him. But God let Him die, didn't He?"

Larrick did not answer. He was not especially pious, but he was afraid of such talk. He believed in using sacred names only for prayer and profanity. Miss Fleet was impudent to everybody, including Heaven, and she enjoyed the shocks she gave. She believed in shocks for shock's sake.

"But to come down to earth," she said. "You know I like you. Of course, I want to beat your head off about half the time, but that's out of pure affection for you. So I want to warn you not to get in too deep with Clelia. She's a darling. She'll be a glorious woman. But she'll break lovers and husbands the way she breaks wild colts. You don't want to be only part of a stable with only one stall in her heart, do you? You'll never get her for your own. You couldn't hold her if you did."

"She likes you; but then, everybody does. Besides, she likes everybody—and everything. And that's the heart-breakingly, cruellest sort of person there is. You won't thank me for it, and perhaps I'm only a hypocrite dressing up plain jealousy in a pink domino of altruism; but I'm going to stick around and save you from Clelia."

Larrick snickered a little, uncomfortably amused, and said: "I'm mighty much obliged. But I reckon we've got to find her, before you save me from her."

"Oh, we'll find her. I only hope she doesn't find herself in the headlines of the papers."

Poor Clelia reached the big type, but in a way that none of them imagined in their most fantastic guessings.

CHAPTER IV

IT was Miss Fleet's way to play the game above the table. She would play with all her might and use all the legitimate ruses, but she would not stack the deck nor slip cards up her sleeve.

And now having given Larrick fair warning of her intentions, she went back to Mrs. Roantree and the two men.

Mrs. Roantree was so melancholy that she was ready to believe anything horrible. She flatly announced her intuition that Clelia had killed herself.

"Nonsense, my dear!" cried Miss Fleet. "Clelia might kill herself dancing, but no other way. She isn't the suicide sort. Elope? Yes! She might run away with almost anybody just for the excitement of the sprint. But death? What should she want with that, when life is so full of such numbers of things?"

"Who could she have eloped with?" Mrs. Roantree snapped. She was secure enough to leave *whom* to grammarians and social strugglers.

Miss Fleet evaded this question with a shrug, but Randel had a suggestion: "There's Coykendall. He was rushing her mighty hard."

"But they had a quarrel last night," Burnley objected.

"That's as good a prelude to an elopement as any," said Miss Fleet. "And Clelia was never of the same mind two days running."

Mrs. Roantree answered coldly: "There's one little difficulty: Coykendall can't remarry, since his wife divorced him."

"He can't remarry in New York, but they could go to another State."

Mrs. Roantree would never permit anybody else to criticize her kith. "Clelia is decent, at least. She is incapable of such a thing. Besides, Coykendall didn't go away with her. He went with the crowd."

Randel had all the stubbornness of a sickly mind. "Well, she might have skipped out ahead. He could drop off at some station. But I don't insist on Coykendall. There may be somebody you never knew she knew. How about the young professional dancer over at the hotel? She rushed him pretty hard."

Mrs. Roantree sniffed: "You're really too indecent."

Miss Fleet came to her support: "Clelia only danced with him because he danced better than anybody else up here. She loved him as she loved a good racing car, because he furnished her with—transportation."

Mrs. Roantree added another argument: "And of course, Clelia would never marry out of her class."

"Class!" Randel laughed harshly. "Girls never do, of course!"

Larrick felt uneasy at this discussion of class. He was not quite sure what class meant, but he was sure that he was not in theirs, whatever it was.

Burnley wasted a bit of sarcasm on the petulant Randel: "She might have run off with one of the grooms or chauffeurs or one of the boatmen, perhaps."

Randel turned quite nasty: "It has happened, hasn't it? Rich girls of what are known as 'the best families' have been running away with their inferiors



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since the world began. You know one or two shining lights who have eloped with their father's chauffeurs, just as the men of the best families marry their housekeepers or their stenographers, or chorus girls. When I was a boy, marriages with coachmen were very popular. In the old Roman days it was charioteers and gladiators who got the swell girls. Before long, I suppose it will be liveried aviators running the family aéro-limousines. You'll find that what has happened keeps on happening."

There was just enough hatefulness about the suggestion to make it abominably plausible. Larrick was revolted by the merciless imagination of Randel. But he dared not protest, since the only protest he could think of would have to be expressed by his fist. His fist was his substitute for sarcasm, irony, innuendo and other forms of light repartee. It tingled now to stamp the slander back into Randel's teeth, but Randel's weakness saved him. One cannot slug an invalid.

Burnley cleared the air by wholesome comment: "You know Clelia better than to talk such rot. Clelia's not that sort at all."

"Oh, you know all that goes on in a girl's soul, I suppose," Randel sneered. "You know all the things she's capable of, all her secret thoughts and letters and the crazy things she calls romance, eh?"

"I'm not God; but I know Clelia better than you do. You've got the girl all wrong. Whatever else she was, she was no sneak. If she had wanted to marry a chauffeur, she'd have said so, and she'd have torn the world apart to get him. She wasn't afraid of anything or anybody. She said what she thought as fast as she thought it, and she did what she wanted to when she wanted to."

EVEN Randel nodded to this. He acknowledged his defeat with a grumble and kept silent. Clelia's fearlessness was indeed her first quality. She was not afraid of bodily or mental risk. She had a contempt for physical and spiritual danger. She did not care where she went or with whom, confident always that she could take care of herself. She was not even afraid of gossip. She got herself talked about by the respecters of appearances; but what's the fun of gossip if the slandered one laughs at it? She did not trouble to be discreet or to avoid the look of evil. She despised scandal, and was so high of pride that somehow she made nearly everybody feel that her pride guaranteed her good conduct.

Larrick admired her as he admired a beautiful, unbreakable bronco, whose very intractability compels affection. He had winced at much that was said, but had held his peace until Mrs. Roantree sighed:

"That's true. Clelia would never have run away from anything or anybody. She wouldn't have run away with anybody."

Then Larrick's patience broke, and he spoke up startlingly: "I wish you-all would quit sayin' 'she was' and 'she wasn't,' 'she would' and 'she wouldn't.' Why can't you say 'she is,' or 'she isn't?' Sounds to me as if you-all had already given her up for gone. I don't like that past-tense business."



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"Quite right, Mr. Larrick," said Mrs. Roantree, pleased for once to be rebuked. "This is not an inquest. Clelia is somewhere, and no doubt she has a perfectly good reason for being there. It's simple madness to imagine her running away with Coykendall. There's the Frewin boy, though. Clelia was always rather fond of him. But he was afraid of his mother, and his mother didn't approve of Clelia. Mothers don't count, of course. I never had any influence over any of my children. Heaven knows they wouldn't let me have any say about their wives, though I couldn't have picked worse ones than they did. Frewin might have persuaded Clelia to marry him, but—is there any reason why Clelia shouldn't have married him openly if she wanted to? His mother's objections would only have made him a little more interesting to Clelia. There wasn't any other obstacle, was there?"

Burnley blurted out: "Well, of course there was—"

He caught himself. Mrs. Roantree waited, then urged:

"Go on, tell me!"

"It wouldn't be clubby, and it was only gossip."

"What's better than gossip? Tell me, before I scream!"

Burnley shook his head stubbornly and would not be pumped.

"That's a dirty trick," said Nancy Fleet. "Here we are all locked up in the snow, and I say that any fellow who knows any scandal ought to share it with the rest of us."

Burnley kept wagging his head from side to side.

CHAPTER V

MRS. ROANTREE subsided into a sulk of baffled curiosity. The men smoked and pondered. The flames aspired and sprang from the logs they consumed, like gaudy banners flaunted in a gale. In the gleaming embers below the logs was a kaleidoscope of hot colors; and Larrick, who had spent many a lonely hour with nothing else to read or heed but the shifting pictures in a fire, fell into an old habit of seeing landscapes there and watching the transaction of remembered incidents.

He fell to thinking of young Frewin and of his first meeting with the youth. It seemed to him that if Clelia had run away with anybody, it would probably have been with Frewin, for Frewin was handsome, well-born, magnetic, and impulsive enough to be always interesting.

If it had not been for Norry Frewin, Larrick would never have met Clelia. If it had not been for Larrick, Frewin would never have lived to present him to Clelia, or to be discussed as her possible abductor. Larrick even now could not tell just how he felt toward Frewin; his gratitude, resentment, affection, envy and contempt for the man were all so keen and so contradictory.

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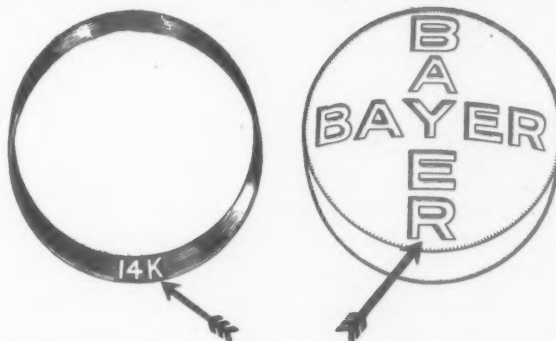
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In one year	In two years

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Address.....

Frewin had quarreled with his enormously wealthy father years before, and an impulse had led him to shake the golden dust of the New York home from his feet and fling to the opposite extreme of life, the very deserts of the Southwest. He had been drawn there by the heroic tales he had read of cowboy land, the myth-realm of the American youth—what the clouds and their thunderers were to the Scandinavians, and the scenes of demigodly feats to the Greeks.

It had not taken long to convince Frewin that the desert was not for him. The pine shacks and tawdry gambling-saloons along the muddy and dusty wallows called streets, and the uncouth, unkempt cattle-folk who amused themselves dismally there, were not likely to fascinate a fastidious soul that had found the Tenderloin of New York stupid and its sophisticated populace dull.

But his pride long survived his money, and he had tried to stick it out—had tried to get money by gambling and finally even by labor. His language and his very intonations, however, branded him as a foreigner, and the traits that proved him well bred in the East proved him not bred at all in the West. In consequence he suffered cruel humiliations, privations, degradations, till his proud spirit was all in a dismay and he was afraid to call his soul his own.

In an hour of morbid dejection and of desperate hunger he wandered into a decrepit saloon that was a disgrace even to the starveling village where the best was of the worst. It happened that Larrick happened to slide off his horse outside that same saloon. Otherwise, the other things that happened would never have been.

LARRICK knew nothing of the velvet of life, which was all Frewin had known until recently. But even to Larrick that town and that gin-joint were disheartening. He was in a grouch against life in general and cattle-punching in particular. He was ready to fight with anybody or anything, cayuse, steer, sheriff or God. When he shambled inside the floppy door and glowered at the dreary bar with its woeful meanness, he was about to fling out again, but he noticed the peculiar behavior of the young man he afterward came to know so well as Frewin.

The first thing that caught his attention was Frewin's embarrassment. The young fellow was manifestly hesitating to approach the bar. Larrick could not guess that the shabby and disconsolate youth was trying to muster the courage to ask the barkeeper to lend him a drink and a clutch of the odious free lunch. Frewin had been so used to starting accounts anywhere in New York that a request for credit seemed to be a natural approach. His self-respect balked at the present necessity, however, and he paused.

Larrick, for lack of any other curiosity about anybody in the world, watched him, wondering what worried him. Hunched over the bar was a boozy braggart, that old-fashioned thing known as a "bad man," this poor town's one best bad man, and drunk enough to be really bad. Spot Caper was drunk enough to have slung the obsolete accouterment of a gun and holster at his groin, and he was

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telling the surfeited barkeeper of a man he was going to get, and get good and plenty.

Frewin did not have a gun and would never have used it if he had. Larrick owned a gun but carried it only for rattlesnakes and Mexicans when he was riding range. Frewin had not been trained to the use of a revolver as a proof of sincerity or as italics to remarks. He was utterly unready for what followed.

As he approached the barkeeper and bent across the soppy counter to beg a very private ear, his elbow struck the bad man's glass of whisky and sent it rolling. It scattered all its precious liquid fire and ended in a crash at the barkeeper's feet. Frewin was dumfounded at the leonine belch of rage that Spot Capet emitted. Frewin mumbled in his drawing-room tones:

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" and was about to offer handsomely to buy another round of drinks, when his tongue was locked by the horrible fact that he had never a dime to buy one with.

SPOT roared. "Sorry! You're sorry, are you? Well, what the hell does sorry get me? You—"

The worst of it was that Spot was also dimeless and had already been dunned by the barkeeper for his past account and forced to pay for the late spilled liquor. The barkeeper also was furious at the breakage, waiting for Frewin to make good.

The Prodigal took the curses and the contumely of Spot till his gorge rose, and he protested feebly with:

"I've apologized, and that's all I can do."

Apparently it was. For he did not move when, with a startling whisk, Spot flashed his gun from its case and jammed its muzzle into Frewin's very teeth. He was too scared to move. He did not budge or speak even when Spot damned and double-damned him for everything loathsome and told him just what parts of him he would shoot off if he didn't shell out and shell out quick.

It was Larrick who moved. Under some odd compulsion that he never could explain, he took two or three strides forward, and arriving by Frewin, who was nothing at all to him, shouldered Frewin aside, and took his place in front of the gun of Spot Capet, whom also he had never seen before.

When the surprised and infuriated Spot barked at him to get the hell out of there, or take what came, the amazed and amazing Larrick leaned forward and pressed his forehead against the muzzle of Capet's pistol and commanded:

"Go on and shoot!"

"Pull your freight, or by God I will!" Capet yelled.

But Larrick answered "Agh!" a long, disgusted "Agh!" and pressing his brow harder against the black mouth of the weapon invited the death so lightly leashed that it was almost as dangerous for Capet to lift his finger from the trigger as to press it.

Larrick waited a moment in that ridiculous sublimity of offering himself in the stead of a stranger; and then, as if to take away the last hint of nobility, he embellished the vicarious sacrifice with the dirtiest language in his memory. One

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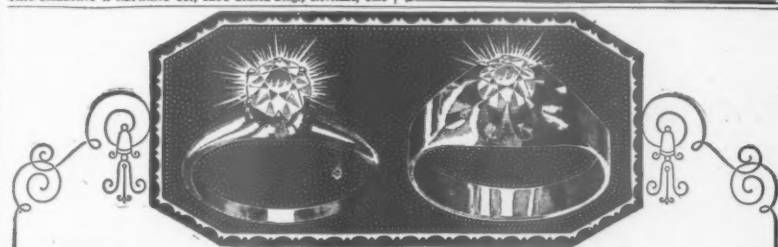
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may not print nowadays all the words one hears all about him, but among the publishable remarks of Larrick's Frewin remembered something to this effect:

"You cain't shoot, and you know it, you yalla-livered skunk. You cain't even leave go of the trigga. You cain't dew nothin' at tall! But I'll tell you what I'm goin' to dew. I'm goin' to kick—"

During the elaborate program of activities that Larrick outlined, Spot Capet went quite to pieces. His trigger-finger collapsed. His elbow relaxed. His jaw dropped. His head rolled. His tongue oozed out. His knees caved. He broke gradually everywhere and went to the floor as abject as if he belonged in the spittoon he fell across.

Then Larrick, a little overstrained by his own storm, was frenzied enough to turn on the craven at his feet and kick him across the room, rolling and sprawling and creeping on all fours, till a final bull's-eye in the full target sent Capet under the half-door and out into the street.

Spot had dropped his useless pistol in transit. Larrick picked it up, slapped it on the bar and said to the awestruck proprietor:

"Give that back to old What's-his-name when he comes round sober, and tell him to swap it for a pep-mint-stick or somethin' he can use."

FREWIN sidled meekly to his elbow and mumbled:

"You're the bravest man I ever heard of or read about; and that's the bravest thing that was ever done."

"Brave, hell!" Larrick yawned.

But Frewin would not be denied his tribute. With a formality he could not help, though it shamed him, he faltered:

"How can I ever repay you?"

"Buy me a drink, and forget it."

"But I—I can't."

"Broke?" Frewin's head dropped.

"Then I'll buy you one. I been there a many's the time. Hey, boss, set that bottle marked Bourbon ova heah, with tew glasses."

The raw whisky tasted like a red-hot poker all the way down Frewin's gullet, but it anesthetized his pride enough to enable him to accept further alms of the same sort from his ribald savior. When their legs began to corkscrew, they gyrate to a table and sat down for further drinks. Frewin grew talkative, told his real name and his station and all about the old man in New York and his poor mother waiting for him.

Larrick's whisky gave him solemnity, and he sermonized.

"Djou evva hear tell of the Pro'gal Son? 'Member the par'ble abote the Proggal Son in New Tes'ment? Fella that lef' fine ranch and ate husks offn the hawks? Well, you're just anotha damn Proggal, and you're goin' back and fall on your old dad sneek same way."

"Imposs'ble!" Frewin wailed. "Too late! Oh, it stew late!"

Larrick smote the table till the glasses leaped, and mounted to his highest ferocity as he shouted:

"You're goin' home on firs' train like a gen'laman, or I'm goin' to kick you all way to N'Yawk like I kicked old Whass-name into the street."



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Frewin yielded to this frightful promise and consented to start as soon as he was sober enough. Larrick agreed that it would be well to wait for this moment, and they fell back in their chairs and slept for several hours.

Sleep, followed by cold water and coffee and some much-needed food, restored the two young men to their senses sufficiently to debate the problem of raising the amount of the fare to New York. Larrick found a friend who lent him the amount on his own recognizance, and the next day he put Frewin aboard the train to paradise. He had contributed enough beside the fare for a shave and a haircut and a bath at the barber-shop, some clean linen and a little pocket-money.

By the time the train pulled out, the New Yorker and the Texan were Damon and Pythias, but strange things had to occur before they met again. By the time Frewin had reached home and the all-forgiving welcome there, and had sent back a letter of gratitude and the borrowed money with usury, Larrick had vanished into the wilderness, taking a new job and worrying little about his delay in repaying the man who staked him the fund for the restoration of Frewin to respectability. The letter was returned to Frewin and left him with an indissoluble obligation on his head.

And now, a year later, the once penniless Larrick was a rich guest in an Adirondack camp, wondering if Frewin had stolen from him the rich maiden he loved, and wondering if his hatred of Frewin were great enough to exceed his love for the man.

Larrick said to himself: "If Frewin has carried off my Clelia, I'll kill him." But he knew that he could not harm the man he had already saved more than once at the risk of his own life. It is a maddening thing to be the victim of impulses beyond prophecy; and Larrick, cursing his own helplessness, plunged once more into the blizzard to get away from the cyclone in his own soul.

CHAPTER VI

THE storm was in full cry now. The air seemed to have gone mad, to be venomous with implacable rancor. The snow had changed to splintered ice, a hurricane of thorns, blistering cold, blinding, freezing the eyeballs. When Larrick bent his back to the gale, the air went forward with such onrush that he seemed to gulp for breath in a vacuum. He who had come forth to hunt somebody had soon almost forgotten who it was he sought, for now he was lost utterly.

He ran blundering, with the complete cowardice of a child in a nightmare. He slammed into trees and bruised his forehead on their columns of ice. He threshed through bushes that were but stalactites crackling as he fell among them. He remembered with aggravated fear that lost men wander in circles till they drop. He tried to go straight, but the world was all circles, spirals, whorls, intortions, the scrawls of a madman's penmanship.

He was as devoid of reason as the demonic tempest when at last he was blown against something like a wall. It



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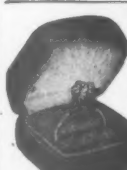
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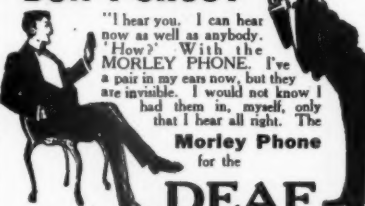
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was a wall, a wall of pine boards with the bark on them. He was rejoiced to tears at finding again something that was gloriously flat and vertical and rectangular, something built with hands—that masterpiece of architecture, a woodshed.

Larrick's wits now rallied like the remnants of a defeated army. In the lee of the shed there was a little mercy for the eyes. He could open them and peer through the tossing maelstrom, and he could make out vaguely and fitfully other blurs of shadow that must be the other houses of the camp. Filling his lungs with air, like a pearl-diver, he plunged into the billows and swam to the next building. He won to his goal. It was the dance-house! He would not submit to the mockery of dying outside a forsaken dance-hall, and he dived into the torrent again, toward the billiard-house, and made it. He was tiring fast, but he drove on again toward the cook-house.

He missed it in the white darkness but ran plump into the big house and slid along its wall to find the door. The wind howled and shrieked, but abruptly he heard an added cry and pushing forward, thrust his hands against a mass of snow drenched fur. A human form turned, and clumsy mittened hands ran to his. He peered through the white swirl and hardly recognized who it was before their noses met in an Eskimo salute.

It was Nancy Fleet. She had bundled herself up and come out after him. The blizzard had flung her back and flattened her against the wall, but she had continued to scream his name this time and that in the hope that he might hear it. She had acted as a Samaritan Lorelei.

LARRICK could not hear what she said till they were out of the bluster, but his heart knew hers for its brave devotion, and she was suddenly endeared to him in a perilous way. He was so weakened by this contact with human tenderness after the bitter wrestle with the hate of nature that he could hardly win to the door. Nancy took a vast comfort and pride in setting her arms about him and aiding him. She had to mock her own emotion, and as they fell through into the great room where the high flames choired like seraphim, she shouted: "Enter the Watteau Shepherdess with the lost ram."

Only now did Larrick realize how cold he had been. He was a long while getting back to a living temperature, but at length he was stretched out in a big chair and toasting comfortably while Miss Fleet played Hebe with the whisky and Mrs. Roantree recounted the theories that had been advanced in his absence.

"The only thing we haven't discussed as a possibility is murder," she said.

Larrick sat up with a gasp. She was despairful enough to explain:

"People do get murdered all the time. People disappear, and years afterward their bones are found, or somebody makes a deathbed confession."

"But who could have murdered Miss Clelia?" Larrick demanded, "and why?"

"If I knew, I shouldn't be guessing, should I?" Mrs. Roantree sobbed. "Somebody might have entered the poor child's room and dragged her out; or called her out into the woods and bludgeoned her. There are insane men, loose in the forest,

half-crazy hermits, queer tramps. The Adirondacks was a favorite place for draft-evaders in the Civil War, and in the last war too. The Indians used to be all through here—and outlaws. Who can tell what terrible creature might not have made away with her? My God, I wish that storm would stop shrieking so. It sounds like Clelia crying for help. She may be out there calling while we sit here and do nothing."

But there was nothing to do. A glance at the murderous storm was enough to quell any thoughts of wrestling with it for its prey. To attempt it would be only to sacrifice one certain victim for an uncertain.

CHAPTER VII

THE guide brought them what food he could. He had fastened a rope from the big house to the cook-house, and carried his rough fare through the tempest as a ship's cook might fight his way from the galley along a lifeline over a wave-swept deck to the captain on the bridge.

It grew dark early, and they all pretended to be sleepy to get away from each other's eyes. The men found quarters in the rooms of the departed women guests. Nobody wanted to sleep where Clelia had been, and they left that shrine to its loneliness.

The little Empress had to be plucked away from the clothes she snuggled in; and she kept going back to the shut door and scratching at it, or sitting close and looking back to appeal for admittance. She barked and whined and refused to be held and comforted. Mrs. Roantree cursed her for a little pest, but cuddled her and wept over her and took her into her own bed for the night.

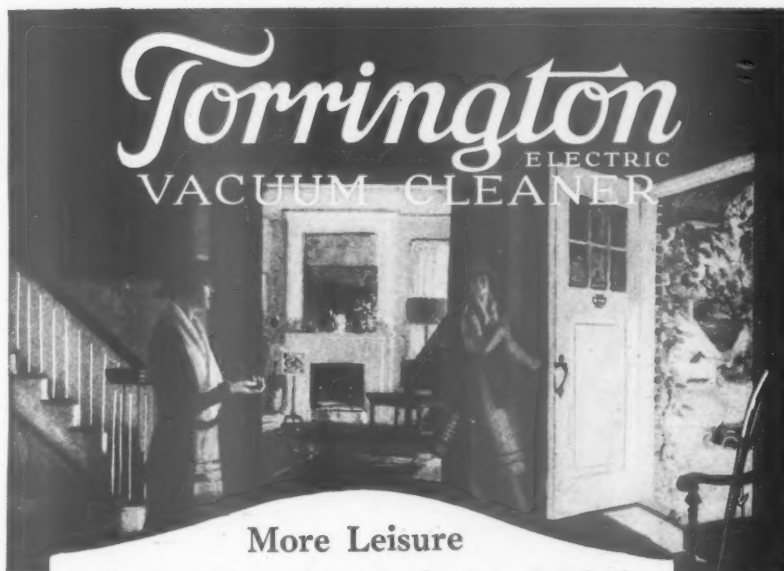
Larrick tried to immerse himself in sleep for blessed oblivion's sake, but the tumult outside was repeated in the uproar of his own thoughts. He stole back to the fire, but the pictures in the embers were infernal. He sought a book in search of that chloroform for unrest which is one of the greatest benefits of the alphabet, the story-teller's medicine. He happened upon the soldier's portion of the camp's library and plucked from the shelves the second volume of the "Diary of Samuel Pepys." And there he happened on one entry that mentioned the attempt at suicide of a girl and the reasons she gave: "because she did not like herself, nor had not liked herself, nor anything she did a great while."

Larrick closed the book and meditated the tremendous eloquence of that piteous apology.

He wondered if Clelia could have felt so about herself. Larrick had felt little else of himself a great while. But Clelia—with all her beauty, her versatility in enjoyment, her treasures of praise, could she ever have known such dejection? And yet, who could fathom the shadows in another's soul? Who could follow the patterns of another's thoughts?

Larrick pushed the volume back into its own ranks, and pulled out one on a lower shelf. Luck brought him "The Conspiracy of Pontiac," by Francis Parkman, great historian, great writer.

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his eyes. He knew the Indians and he loved the stories of their wiles and the wiliest ways of the whites. At length he fell upon the superb pages where Parkman contrasted the feast and the famine of a New York tribe—first the happy days of summer, and then:

But when winter descends upon the north, sealing up the fountains, fettering the streams, and turning the green-robed forests to shivering nakedness, then, bearing their frail dwellings on their backs, the Ojibwa family wander forth into the wilderness cheered only on their dreary track, by the whistling of the north wind and the hungry howl of the wolves. By the banks of some frozen stream women and children, men and dogs, lie crouched together around the fire. They spread their benumbed fingers over the embers, while the wind shrieks through the fir-trees like the gale through the rigging of a frigate, and the narrow concave of the wigwam sparkles with the frost-work of their congealed breath. In vain they beat the magic drum, and call upon their guardian manitous—the wary moose keeps aloof, the bear lies close in his hollow tree, and famine stares them in the face. And now the hunter can fight no more against the nipping cold and blinding sleet. Stiff and stark, with haggard cheek and shriveled lip, he lies among the snowdrifts; till with tooth and claw the famished wildcat strives in vain to pierce the frigid marble of his limbs.

Larrick paused. He had not read much, and never such living words. With a ghastly reality he saw the lost Clelia in the place of the frozen Indian and read again that marvelous sentence, changing a word unconsciously.

"With tooth and claw, the famished wildcat strives in vain to pierce the frigid marble of her limbs."

This was unendurably actual, and Larrick gave Clelia up for lost, and hated the north with redoubled hate now that he had surrendered to its spite the fairest thing he had found among its beauties.

One thing was certain; the perfect sculpture of her marble should not be left to the obscene brutality that spring and summer would wreak upon it. He must find her and bring her in.

CHAPTER VIII

HE went to the window to look out into the storm. The glass was so cold that it chilled him to stand close. But he noted that the virulence of the gale had diminished. The sleet had gone and there was only a trouble of fitting snow, tapping at the window as with finger-tips and floating by, yet always there. The lake had long since vanished. It must have been coated with a thick armor of ice to uphold the burden of snow that turned it into a white and wind-wrung prairie.

It terrified Larrick with a peculiar terror to think of a death in the cold. He hoped with a violence of hope that Clelia had after all been spared such a death. She should go out like a flame or droop like a flower over the edge of a silver vase. Only a night ago he had seen her dancing on the veranda with Frevin in the moonlight as the phonograph

churned out jazz-music. He had suffered at seeing her dance so flippantly, so fluently, with another man. How glad he would be to see her there again, even in another man's arms!

He had not been the only one jealous of Frewin. Coykendall had been frankly ugly. There had been a quarrel. What if he had somehow coaxed Clelia out into the blue midnight and frightened her so that she had run away from him! He might have pursued her and killed her in a spasm of black wrath, leaving her hidden body to be made marble by the storm. Or she might have escaped him and lost herself somewhere, wandered too far, slid down a ravine and broken her bones. What if she had stepped into one of the steel traps set for annoying animals? She might have slipped into one of these leaping streams and drowned in a trout pool.

She might still be alive. Some little of that abounding vitality of hers might remain and he might save her yet. He could not endure to stand and gaze. He must keep moving. Stealing about quietly, he found heavy wraps and boots and slipped out into the hushed air.

His feet broke through the crust and sank deep and must be hoisted out with effort. He made little progress, floundering, falling, disgusting himself with his awkwardness. He saw that he would have to have snowshoes. He did not know where the guide kept them. He did not know how to put them on.

He turned about and retreated to the house, doddering like a man on broken stilts. He flung into his bed and shivered, wondering how he could endure the waiting. But sleep mercifully set his clock forward by many hours.

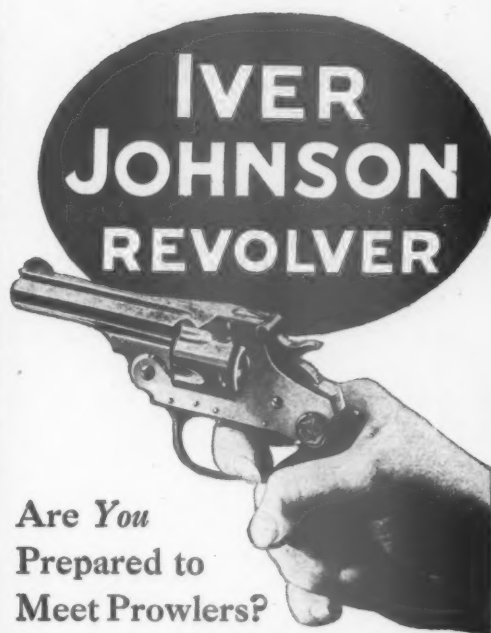
THE next morning he woke early before the others. He dressed quickly and sought the fireplace and made himself much coffee. Then he asked the guide for snowshoes.

Jeffers was surly about Larrick's plan to go out again. The uselessness of it offended him. He refused to be an accessory. Larrick hardly persuaded him to produce a pair of snowshoes and fasten them on to his ankles with thongs. Larrick walked as on tennis rackets. He stepped on his own broad soles and could not tell which foot to lift. He fell in every imaginable humiliating way. But at last he learned to shuffle along somehow and he struck forth into the white desert, across the clearing into the woods, eager to be away before anyone else could volunteer to come with him.

The going was maddeningly perverse. The blizzard had assailed him, but now the quiet world lay mute and mocked him with its contempt. He panted with the effort and streamed with sweat that turned cold upon him when he sank down.

In one of his pauses he bethought him of a picture of Clelia that he had torn out of a newspaper a few days after he had met her for the first time. He had carried it in his wallet ever since, and he wondered if he still had it.

He took off a glove and groped inside his coats for his pocketbook. He found what he sought, a ragged bit of a Sunday supplement picturing various personages who had taken part in a lawn-



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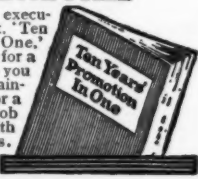
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fête for charity. Yes, there she was, "Miss Clelia Blakeney as Puck."

The paper was creased and blurred with long wear, but the sight of her picture evoked her as she had first stolen into his sight. At the edge of the millionaire's empty lawn there had been a stone wall that kept a thicket of trees from marching into the little plain. A searchlight from the roof had gone exploring the edge of that wood. Suddenly it had discovered the figure of Puck come to life from Shakespeare's pages—a lissome girl in the clothes of a lad of that period, with a touch of fantasy about the garb.

A clatter of palm-applause from the audience in the dark had greeted her; and Frewin, who had brought Larrick to his first lawn affair, had mumbled to him:

"That's Clelia! That's the Clelia Blakeney I've told you about so much!"

He had watched her as she leaped from the wall to the grass and came dancing eerily, darkling, swooping on little scalloped fluttering wings, poising on one toe so lightly that she seemed not to weigh down the clover beneath her; swirling and pirouetting, then halting to recite a bit of verse, and finally with uplifted hands summoning from the woods a pack of fairies and elves, children who swarmed over the wall and filled the lawn with a scurry of robes and a glamour of bare legs and arms and feet.

Larrick could see Clelia at her invocation and could hear her voice, that crisp, pointed New York voice of elegant carelessness and nervous ease, almost the first New York girl's voice he had ever heard.

He could study the picture, but he could not make her dance again. Still, the spell was left and he was assured that she could not have been marked out for such a fate as freezing to death. She would dance out of life as she danced in, for she was always dancing. There could not be cruelty enough, even in this cruel world, to congeal such beauty.

He went back to the house with a heart full of confidence that she had simply fled upon some errand that her own wisdom had made necessary to her all-important happiness.

LARRICK'S recovery from despair encouraged the others, and they settled down to the killing of time until their sentence should expire. They played cards and accepted Mrs. Roantree's temper with good grace. She made and unmade rules as suited her hand, and roundly abused the others and herself with characteristic vigor.

That night, as they played, they heard the wind rising anew, and the noise of it was disheartening. They were remanded to jail for a new term. The gale came back like a sea, only it came now from the opposite quarter. By morning it had swept the lake almost clean, revealing a vast tract of flawed glass.

Larrick was cast down by the renewal of the evil temper of the weather and by the frustration of his escape to the city, where he hoped at least to find Clelia and learn what she had done and why. In his discouragement his optimism began to freeze again. His imagination began to play once more with its dreadful visions;

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he grew restive to resume the hunt. He bundled up again and went out in the deadly cold. He had not gone far when he heard Miss Fleet hailing him.

"Wait for me!" she cried. He turned and saw her plunging toward him through the uncertain drifts, now towering on a pinnacle of ice, now thigh-deep in the snow. She was tremendously wrapped up, but her cheeks were like poppies, and her eyes keen as steel.

He told her of his plan of exploration, and she said: "I know you don't want me, and so I'm coming along. There's always something interesting in being where you're not wanted."

"You're mighty welcome," he lied. She cast up her eyes in acknowledgment of the perjury, and swung along with him. At the edge of the lake he hesitated. He had never set foot before on frozen water. Miss Fleet saw that he was afraid and laughing, launched herself out and coasted on her feet as she had done since childhood.

Larrick tried to copy her, and slipped, sprawled, spun and fell with a crash. She picked him up and did not laugh. She had an idea that it would be more fun to skate. She told him to wait for her and turned back to the house. Glad of being alone again, Larrick ventured along the water's edge with gingerly steps. And suddenly, as he worked his way round one jutting ledge of rock and bent to pass beneath the far outflung branch of a great cedar, he found Clelia.

SHE was right beneath him. He had almost trodden upon her, where she lay like her own reflection fixed and imbedded in her own looking-glass, an imprisoned image seized and held fast by the mirror that loved it. Her perfect body was swathed in a silk nightgown, its delicate wrinkles clustering about her every outline, creamily, rippling with an eager tenderness over each rounded contour.

Her hands were gabled as in prayer at her young breast. Her eyes were closed. Her hair, disspread and unbound, was aloft like a mist in the ice, as if blown back on a wind, disclosing on her white, white forehead, a deep gash, and one or two drops of blood frozen there into rubies.

Larrick cast himself down to gather and lift her in his arms, but a wall of adamant rebuffed him. In a surge of wild love, he bent to waken her with a kiss, and kissed ice.

When he flung up his head in torment, his lips were already frozen to the mirror, and they bled as he tore them away. He knelt there, beating on the crystal door, crying her name.

"Clelia! Clelia!"

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THE HUNCH

(Continued from page 37)

he went on as Cross gasped in amazement. "The man I'm speaking about is Dave Pollock. He and I happened to be here tonight, and—"

"Dave Pollock?" cried Mellito in hoarse delight. "Dave Pollock, the middleweight? Glory be! Where is he?"

"Dave Pollock?" gabbled Hardin. "Dave Pollock is in the hoosgow down South. He's in for three years. He's got more'n half his term yet to serve. What are you trying to spring on us?"

"He's here, with me," reiterated Johnny. "He got out three days ago, and—"

"He's still got more'n half his term to serve," insisted Hardin, "—unless—unless maybe he's broke jail!" he ended with a sneer.

"Well?" challenged Rile. "If he made a get-away, what's that to you? You're no dep'ty sheriff, I take it. And I'd hate to think you'd do such a dirty thing as to get him sent back just for the sake of claiming any reward that's out for him. The point is, he's here. If you say so, he's ready to take Brady's place in the ring tonight. We'll pocket our share of the purse afterward and light out by the midnight train. Nobody hereabouts is likely to know if Dave's escaped instead of serving his full three years. By the time the papers print the yarn, we'll be a good ways from here and still traveling. But we need ready cash. How about it? Do you want us? Dave can keep on his feet for a couple of rounds, anyway, if Cross will go easy enough with him. And we sure do need the coin! Is it a go?"

And now another figure stood beside Rile's in the low doorway. Cross and Hardin stared keenly at the last arrival. Dave Pollock's once florid face was smeared with grayish prison pallor. His shoulders were hunched, and his head slumped on his stooping neck. His mouth hung slightly open.

As Cross and Hardin, by tacit consent, went over to a far corner of the dressing-room for a whispered conference, Mellito all but embraced the shrinking Pollock.

"Good boy!" he sung out. "Get into that next dressing-room and pile out of your street clothes and into your fighting togs. If you haven't got any trunks and shoes, one of the boys will hustle you a set. The crowd up there is getting nasty. I'll go and announce that we were able to get the famous Dave Pollock in Brady's place, and I'll boost your rep to 'em till they'll be tickled to death at the switch in the program."

He pattered off to make his announcement. Cross did not answer the promoter's parting words, being too busy listening to his own manager.

"It's a pudding!" Hardin was whispering gleefully. "Look at the poor fish! Just look at him! He's dead on his feet. I know how they treat 'em and how they feed 'em in them places. It's a wonder he ever got life enough in him to escape. Take him on. Only try not to cut him up into small independent republics, the first round. Let it look as much like a fight as you can. And—say! As soon

as the fight's over, a tip from me to the chief of police, here, will land him where he belongs. Sometimes they offer pretty high rewards for the return of these birds that fly the coop. A slice of easy reward-money won't hurt us. We—"

"Well," patiently inquired Rile from the doorway, "is it a go? Or do we continue our race for Canada by some earlier train than the midnight?"

"It's a go!" chuckled Hardin. "Hurry your jailbird into his things."

Rile convoyed Dave into the adjoining dressing-room. The room was not empty. Beside Pollock's open suitcase sat Daisy. Very bright of eye she was and very flushed of face.

"I could hear!" she greeted them in an exulting undertone. "Wasn't it wonderful? And—and I've been exploring, too, after I laid out your duds, Dave. The little room off of this is empty. I can stay in it while you're getting ready and while you're up in the ring. Oh, I'm so glad—so glad it's all working out the way I planned it!"

"Things have a way of doing that, little sweetheart!" exclaimed Pollock. "That's why I'm here tonight instead of in a cell. Now run on, and I'll get ready. That crowd doesn't sound exactly patient."

"One second, dear!" she pleaded. "There's something I want to tell you first, something that can't wait—because you'll fight the harder for knowing it. I want you to know that it was Cross and his manager who 'framed' you, down at Bernhardt. They paid Dugan to shoot and then to slip the pistol into your pocket, while one of their own men hit out the light. They bribed him to testify, too. It was Spider Cross who sent you to prison. So when you go into the ring, you've got a double debt to pay, Dave. And—"

"How do you know this?" demanded her brother in wild excitement.

"Never mind how I know," she evaded. "I do know. And Dave believes me. He—"

SHE broke off and ran up to Pollock clutching at his arm. For casting aside coat and vest, he was striding toward the door, his eyes ablaze.

"Let me alone!" he cried fiercely. "I'm going in there to settle with Spider Cross and his cur of a manager. This isn't a thing to be paid for by a few pads of a padded glove. It's to be my fingers in his throat. And my teeth too!" he raged.

The combined efforts of Daisy and Rile scarce held him back. Not until Daisy pleaded, almost on her knees, that he forego the plan for brute vengeance until the needed championship should be his did Dave cease to writhe and snarl in their grasp.

As at last he consented to postpone his wild-beast purpose until after he should have humiliated his foe publicly, Daisy consented to leave the room and the adjacent cubbyhole where she had arranged to wait for the outcome of the fight. Rile followed her into the cubbyhole and shut the door.

"Now," he demanded, "tell me where you got that stuff about Cross and Hardin framing Dave!"

"I didn't get it at all," she confessed humbly. "It was just a hunch—just the same hunch I've had all along, the hunch I've told you about, a hundred times. I'd have told Dave about it before too, if you hadn't said it would make him all the wretcheder in prison. This time he had to be told. He had to! He—"

"D'you mean to say you sprung that story on him without any proof at all?" cried Rile, aghast. "D'you mean to say it was just a lie, to—"

"Hold on!" she commanded, the soft blue eyes hardening to ice.

"But if no one told you—" he sputtered.

"No one told me," she assented. "But that doesn't keep me from being as sure of it as if it was in the Bible. I've known it all along. It came to me, like a flash, that first day at the trial. But you wouldn't believe me—just because I hadn't any proof. You are always prattling about proof! And the very silliest woman can always trust her hunches, without the bother of looking for a proof."

"But—"

"Johnny," she pleaded, "you've trusted me all through this, and you followed my hunches. And it has all come out as I said, hasn't it? Didn't Brady take the extra money and get out of the way? Didn't that gray stuff on poor Dave's face, and the slumpy way I taught him to stand—didn't that fool Cross and Hardin? Hasn't the whole thing worked out as I said it would, from the very start? Hasn't it? Well, then, can't you trust me in this too? Dave hasn't fought for nearly two years. All he's been through has crushed him. He'd have fought this fight and have done his very best. But he has to do more than his very best. For there mustn't be any hitch. So I waited till the last minute and then told him that thing about the frame-up—not sooner, for he'd have brooded over it; and it hurts a man to brood. Now he's crazy mad. He—"

"All ready, Johnny!" sang out Pollock from the other side of the thin door.

JOHNNY RILE dashed out into the dressing-room, gathering up towels and a bottle as he ran.

The audience was still under the spell of Mellito's speech when the champion appeared, in a little cloud of handlers, and made his leisurely way to the ring. A generous round of applause greeted Cross. He nodded stiffly to right and left in acknowledgment of it as he settled himself in his corner.

Three minutes later Dave Pollock appeared. He received no ovation. Indeed, until he began to climb through the ropes, almost nobody recognized him as a fighter. Swathed in an ulster, still bent of shoulder and relaxed of mouth and with eyes half shut, Dave slouched wearily into his chair. He was staring at the floor. He did not look up in response to a feeble and scattered handclapping, nor to the hoots and laughter of the more callous members of the audience.

Johnny Rile and Hardin examined the



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five-ounce gloves that were taken from their gaudy pasteboard boxes, and carried them across to their respective principals. Cross' fists were bandaged in workmanlike fashion with adhesive plaster. Dave's convulsively clenched knuckles were bare. Rile adjusted the gloves to Pollock's hands, deftly showing back the horse-hair from the knuckles in immemorial prizefight custom.

As the referee called the fighters to the center of the ring for final instructions, Cross stepped out of his clinging bathrobe. A buzz of approval greeted his splendid physique as it was revealed under the glare of the arc lights. Dave did not remove the flapping ulster in slouching forward for instructions. He stood, stooped and apathetic, while the referee droned forth the usual formula as he clinches and breaks.

Not until the bell rang for the first round did Pollock cast aside the ulster from his bent shoulders. Then, leaping from his stool, he flashed into mid-ring to confront the advancing Cross.

With the discarding of the coat, he had shaken off his listlessness, his listless stare, his slump of the shoulders. There was another buzz from the spectators, this time of wonder, at the lightning transformation of the sorry-looking fighter. Dave's bare upper body gleamed and rippled with mighty strength and perfect health. His muscles swelled beneath the satin skin. His eyes were clear and furiously alert. His mouth was like iron.

CROSS had extended his gloved right hand for the customary shake, and a patronizing grin was on his crafty face. But the grin vanished into blankness at sight of his transfigured antagonist. Dave slapped aside the proffered glove.

"I'm here, you swine!" he said in a clear, eager whisper as the two fell into position and began to spar. "I'm here! For sixteen months I've been training for you—in the prison foundry. Here's where you lose the championship you stole—and your life with it. You framed me and sent me to prison. I've framed you now, and I'm going to send you to hell."

The simple tenseness of the man robbed his bombastic words of the melodrama that otherwise would have been theirs. They came from the very bottom of a raging heart, and they went through Cross' brain like the breath of flame. The champion, for the first time in his warlike life, was aware of fear.

As he talked, Dave was attacking—not in blind rage, but in a cold ecstasy of purpose that kept his head clear while it added tenfold to his prowess. Assuredly, Daisy Rile was a born psychologist.

Straight for his opponent's body and jaw, Pollock slugged his way—boring resistlessly and ignoring the heavy punishment that he received in turn. The sixteen months of terrific toil at the prison foundry had hardened him and one of his own anvils scarce had greater powers of endurance. Such speed as he might have lost during his long confinement was lent to him by the new and murderous rage imparted by Daisy's news. From the start he took the



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gressive; and he held it. Ever boxing in, he broke down Cross' staunch guard time and again by sheer force, and planted the blows he desired. Or else he would take unflinchingly his enemy's heaviest blow, for the sake of landing the longed-for counter.

The spectators had come out of their first dearth of interest. Men were on their feet, yelling. This was no tame boxing-match, but a *fight*. These men were throwing science to the winds and were exchanging crashing smashes like two maddened longshoremen. And the supposedly down-and-out Pollock was proving himself a wonder.

As Cross went back to his corner at the end of the first round, with the hands busy over him, Hardin adjured:

"What d'you think you're in? A bar-room scrap? If you stand up to him like that, and slug, a chance blow's liable to get you. Stand off and box till he wears down. He's only a flash in the pan. That hoosgow life of his has taken his stamina. It always does. Box him; keep away from him. Let him wear himself out. But Lord, how he shapes up! How d'you account for—"

"I don't account for anything," grunted Cross, striving to choke back that queer sense of terror and to speak calmly. "Except that we're framed. He's plumb crazy. I can't seem to hurt him. Acts like he's trying to tear me in half. He knows—"

"Well, box him. Keep away from him. Make him do all the work. At this speed he'll blow up in another couple of rounds. Then you can—"

THE ringing of the gong cut short the managerial counsels. Bearing in mind Hardin's advice, Cross danced back from Pollock's bull rush and sought to spin. That was all the good it did him. Dave was after him, breaking past his wily defense, cornering him and driving one blow after another to heart and to wind. "I got some speed left, and some foot-work too!" snarled Pollock as they floundered in a clinch. "I shadow-boxed in my cell, an hour every night. And I ran, 'mark time,' for another half-hour every night too. I've got the speed, and I've got the wind. Pretty soon you'll see I've got the punch."

The referee broke the clinch, cautioning Dave for "holding on." And once more, all over the twenty-four-foot ring, the battle raged.

Through his seeming universality of attack, Dave Pollock was conducting his campaign with calm generalship. He knew a champion seldom trains over-hard for a "set-up" fight. And the first spot in the human anatomy affected by lack of training is the stomach. Therefore he was playing for the wind—often laying himself open to staggering counters in order to hammer an effective punch into Cross' midriff. And he rejoiced grimly to note the increased flinching and other signs of distress that greeted his terrific stomach blows.

In return Dave's own elastic body was undergoing cruel punishment. More and more confused and troubled and terrified, the champion was none the less giving a splendid account of himself. Every ruse, every doubtful trick that could

*Good name in man or woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls;
Who steals my purse, steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
But he that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.*

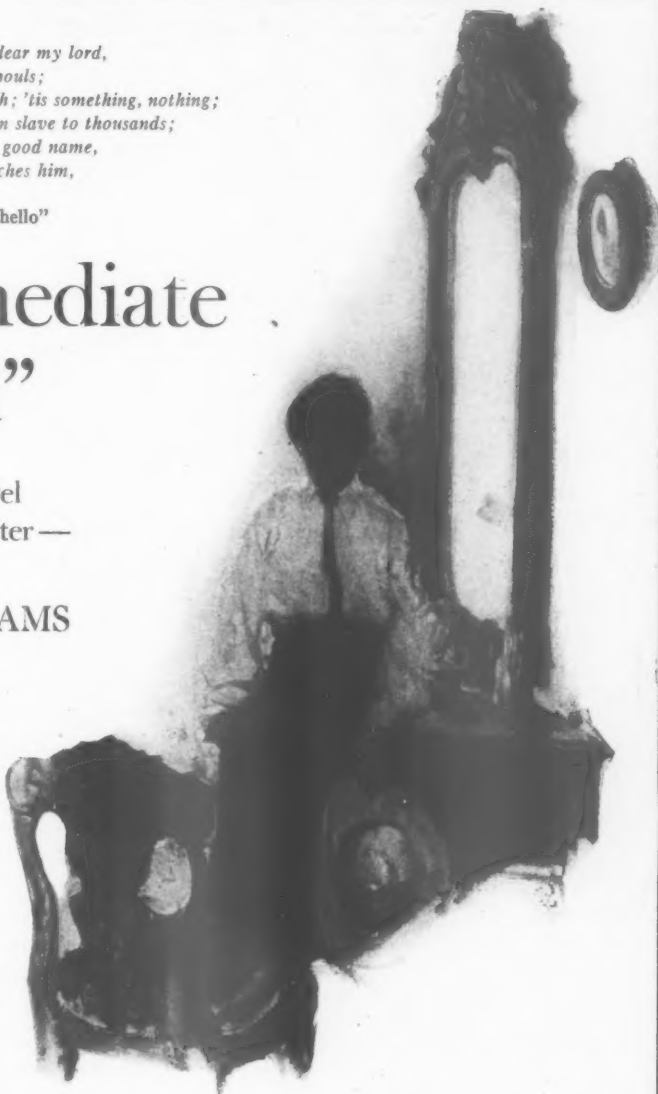
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past the referee, he was employing. As a result even Pollock's granite constitution began to feel the effect of his punishment. Ordinarily Dave would have begun to slow down by this time by reason of his own abnormal speed and of his severe hurts. But the new knowledge that this man was the author of his shame and of his imprisonment was doing odd things to Pollock's excited brain and was lifting him far above form.

The end came in the last half of the seventh round. The long series of stomach punches had cut down Cross' speed and was making him sick and dizzy. Dave feinted for the head, then shot his left fist wickedly to Cross' wind. Cross reeled, gasping, under the fearful impact. For an instant his arms sagged.

And in that briefest of instants Dave Pollock set himself, called on every atom of his wearying strength and speed, and whipped his right across to the jaw.

Cross' knees turned to hot tallow. His chin dropped; and he dropped with it. He fell on his face. Then, with a wholly unconscious twist of the reflexes, he rolled over on his back and lay there asprawl and senseless while the referee's semaphore arm counted him out.

WEAK and reeling, Dave Pollock made his way from the ring and through the mob of yelling spectators who strove to lift to their shoulders the new champion. Brushing them aside, he gained the dressing-room; and the ecstatically happy Johnny Rile barred the door against intruders. Flinging the ulster about Dave's sweating and bloody upper body, Rile chortled through the cubbyhole door:

"Come in here, kid! Come, meet the middleweight champ of the West! He's worth meeting. He—"

A swirl of flying skirts—and Daisy was tearfully embracing the scarecrow figure whose back her brother was so painfully thumping.

"Oh, I knew it! I knew it!" she panted, trying hard not to cry. "I knew it before he went into the ring! And I knew it when I heard the crowd going wild! Only—only, I prayed terribly hard that they might not be going wild about the wrong man! You poor darling! You look awful! He—"

"Cross has a few souvenirs of his own to remember!" said Dave dryly, while Johnny squawked with derision. "Just a few! It's you who did the whole thing, baby! You did it all! I'm not trying to tell you what you've done for me or what it means to me. Now run away a few minutes; I'm going to dress."

But left alone with Johnny Rile, Dave made no move to dress.

"Come along!" he commanded shortly, leading the way to the door.

The light was gone from his battered face, leaving it blanched and dead. Nor did he vouchsafe a word of reply to his manager's puzzled queries. Straight to Spider Cross' dressing room he strode, and entered without knocking. Johnny Rile, with growing fear, trotted in pursuit.

The beaten man was lying on the table while Hardin and one of the handlers worked over him. As Dave and Rile entered, he was opening his eyes drunkenly, and staring about him.

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they're all 'one department men.' They lack the broad grasp of all departments so vital to the successful manager."

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"Wh-what happened?" he bleated. "What happened?" mimicked Dave shoving Hardin aside and glowering down on the prostrate man. "I began the way that I'm going to finish down here. That's what happened. I told you I was going to kill you; and—"

A choking gulp from Cross interrupted him. Memory had come back to the smitten man, and with it a wave of the strange panic.

"No!" he blubbered, shrinking back from the menacing giant who towered wrathfully over him. "No! No! It wasn't me. It wasn't. It was Joe Hardin! I—I swear it was! It was him that hired Dugan and Parker to work it and it was him that paid Dugan to plant the gun on you and to swear like he did at the trial. He figured I didn't have a chance against you. So he framed the whole—"

"Shut up, you mangy liar!" roared Hardin, sensing for the first time the meaning of the hysterical mutterings.

He stamped threateningly forward to clamp his open hand on Cross' mouth. But Johnny Rile, with much suddenness, barred his way.

CROSS, shaken of nerve and racked at body and obsessed by the strange terror that had assailed him in the ring, had cast away the last reserves of self-control. His one dazed idea was to save his own endangered life.

"You did!" he blithered. "You know you did, Joe. It was you who fixed the whole frame-up. You done it so as you and me could—"

"I guess that's about all we'll need, Dave!" interposed Rile, slipping past Hardin and catching the furious Polard authoritatively by the arm. "He coughed up the facts—all of 'em we need. We're two witnesses. Our testimony ought to set you right and put a crimp in these birds' liberty for a while—especially when we get hold of Dugan. He—"

"It's a lie!" stormed Hardin. "Cross is dippy from the beatin' he got. Besides, you're only one witness. What's going to accept an escaped convict's word for anything? I've sent for the chief of police and—"

"When he comes," drawled Rile, forestalling another outburst from Dave, "send him right in to us. We'll be waiting. If you'd bothered to read the rule papers, you'd never have made that escaped convict crack. Because you'd have read, last week, of the two life men, at Logan, who tried to murder the warden. And you'd have read how Dave, here, fought 'em off and saved him. And you'd have read how the Governor pardoned him for it—for that and for him being a model pris'ner. We've got the pardon here with us, and the newspaper clippings, if the chief of police cares to look 'em over."

"You—you admitted—"

"No, I didn't. I never said Dave had escaped. You said so, and I let you go on thinking it. That's all, I guess. Come, Dave. It's up to us to find Dave and tell her a hunch is worth more'n all the proofs that ever happened. So long as it's a woman, the right woman, who has the hunch. Come along!"

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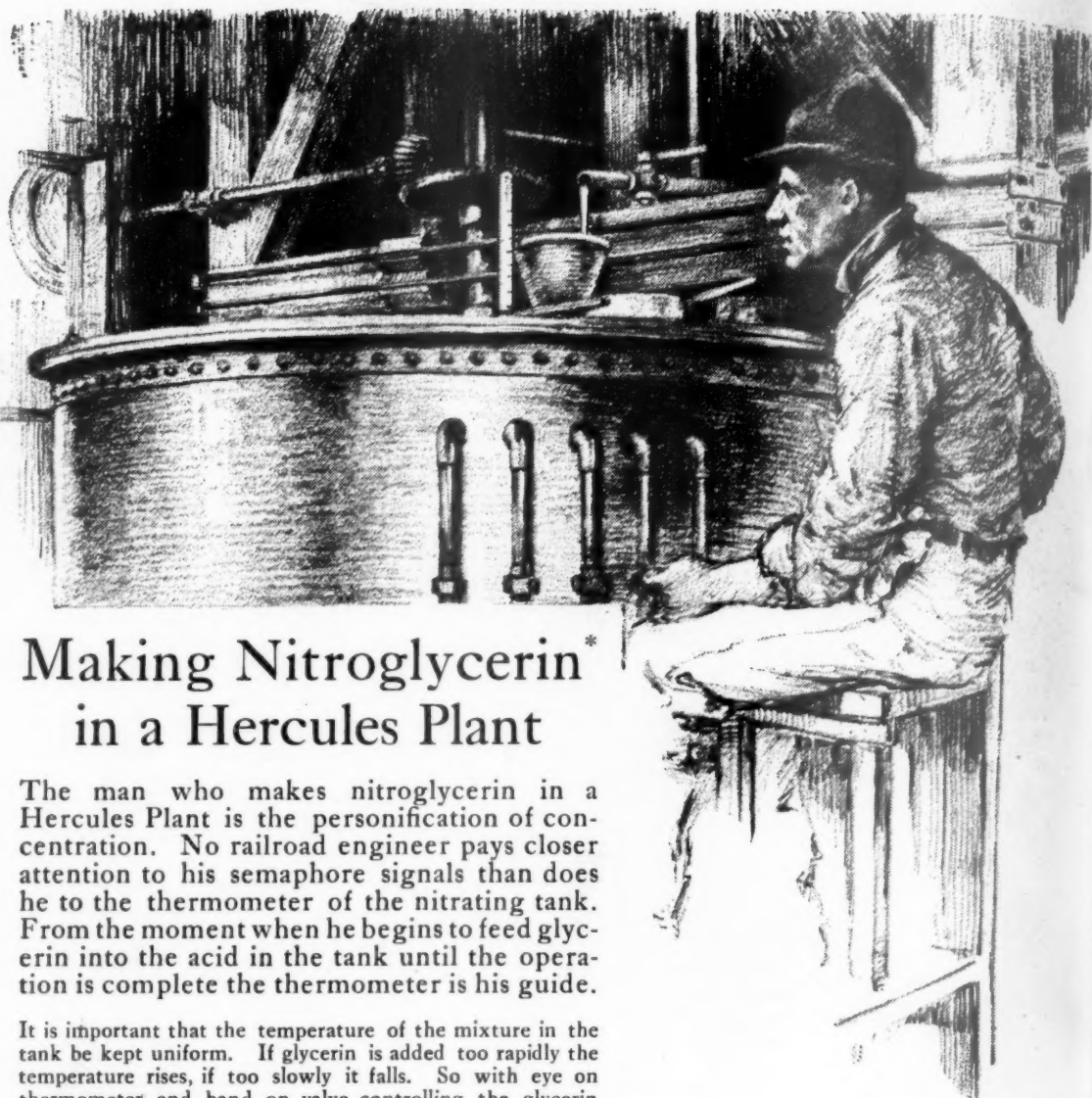
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Her Diary

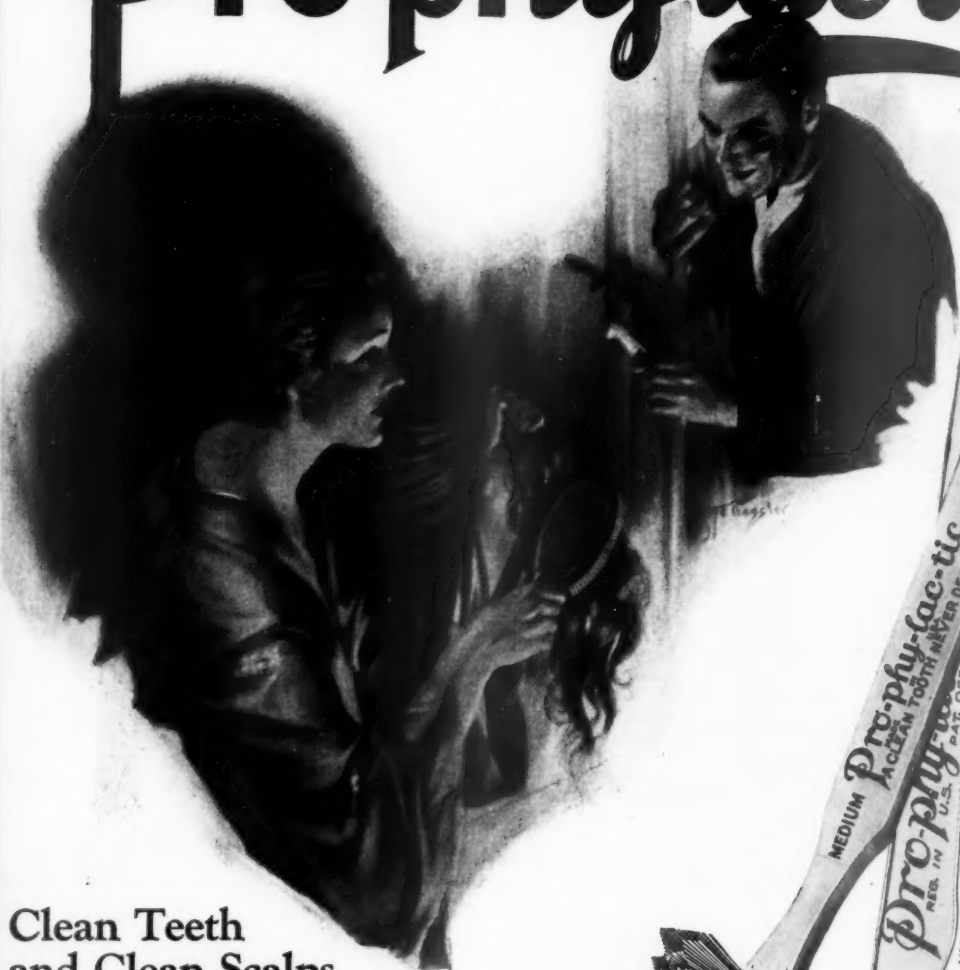
Sept. 12.—Arrived safe. School opens tomorrow and my lovely SHEAFFER Pencil quite prepares me to take down copious notes. Somebody very interesting came and sat opposite me today, and I noticed he uses a SHEAFFER too. So far our tastes agree.

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